COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER AT WEST POINT

CTC SENTINEL

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Contents

About the CTC Sentinel

The Combating Terrorism Center is an independent educational and research institution based in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy, West Point. The CTC Sentinel harnesses the Center's global network of scholars and practitioners to understand and confront contemporary threats posed by terrorism and other forms of political violence.

Profiles of Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq

By Evan Kohlmann and Laith Alkhouri

IN FEBRUARY 2003, the Central Intelligence Agency published a "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism."[1] Drawing on lessons learned from the failures that led to the devastating terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 9/11, the CIA warned that "terrorism cannot have a place of refuge" and, as such, the United States must "ensure effective governance over ungoverned territory, which could provide sanctuary to terrorists."[2] This decision was directly based on the example of Afghanistan, where the United States had detachedly observed—to its later regret—as up to 20,000 foreign fighters traveled to the region in search of paramilitary training and expertise to launch a Sunni Muslim revolution.[3] The events of 9/11 made it painfully clear that there could be severe consequences for permitting ungoverned spaces to lapse into the control of stateless extremists. Had more of this first generation of "muhajirin" possessed European or North American travel documents and citizenship—as in the case with the Syria and Iraq conflicts today—the United States might have faced an unprecedented security threat in the pursuant years.

It is these stark lessons from the era of 9/11 that make the contemporary problem of North American, European, and Australian foreign fighters now gathering in Syria and Iraq under the banner of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Jabhat al-Nusra, and

1 "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism," Central Intelligence Agency, February 2003.
2 Ibid.
3 *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004), p. 67.

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potentially the Khorasan group so troubling. Even rough estimates of their numbers far exceed those seen in prior jihadist conflicts. These numbers include dozens of U.S. nationals, approximately 500 British citizens, and more than 900 residents of France.[4] ISIL propagandists have openly singled out for recruitment "he" who "lives in the West amongst the *kuffar* [disbelievers] for years, spends hours on the internet, reads news and posts on forums."[5] More recently, ISIL leaders have called on their sympathizers to undertake attacks in the West.[6] Indeed, perhaps never in the history of the global jihadist movement has one single conflict attracted so many Westerners seeking to join the cause in such a short period of time—and the stories of these men and women give real reason for pause and reflection.

This article profiles a number of Americans and other Western foreign fighters who traveled to fight in Syria and Iraq, and assesses the potential threat these fighters pose to the West. It finds that these recruits often come from humble and unexpected origins. At times, they are evading the best efforts by law enforcement and intelligence agencies to detect and monitor them. The available evidence suggests they are also readily embracing the notion of combating their enemies far beyond the borders of the Levant.

America's First Suicide Bomber in Syria
On May 25, 2014, Moner Mohammed Abusalha, a 22-year-old American from the sleepy town of Ft. Pierce on Florida's Atlantic coast, drove a truck packed with 17 tons of explosives into a fortified, mountaintop base manned by the Syrian army in Idlib Province, making him the first known suicide bomber in Syria to come from the United States. He conducted his attack on behalf of al-Qa`ida's affiliate in Syria, Jabhat al-Nusra. In the weeks following his death, several videos were published on the internet featuring final recorded messages from Abusalha, including showing him ripping up

his U.S. passport, chewing on parts of it, and setting it on fire. He offered an explicit message in English for the Western public: "You think you are safe where you are, in America and Britain. You think you are safe, you are not safe."[7] Turning his attention directly to President Barack Obama, he vowed, "We are coming for you, mark my words."[8]

In another video, Abusalha calmly recounted how he began "striving" to "get to jihad" while living in Texas. He credited lectures by Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-`Awlaqi on *hijra* for helping inspire him to take action: "he [al-`Awlaqi] says, you make *hijra*, it's like a cliff. You jump off the cliff, but you don't know if the water is deep or shallow. You don't know if there's going to be rocks...you just have to jump and put your [trust] in Allah."[9] Abusalha described the moment he "realized I was being watched by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I had to flee back to [Florida] to throw them off and think that I was somewhere else in the United States." Shortly thereafter, he set off and "walked literally five miles to the airport. I went straight. I didn't look back...I walked with a heavy bag on my shoulders, and...I was singing *anashid*. I was very happy."[10] This enthusiasm was soon tempered with the harsh realities he found at his intended destination: Turkey. He confessed,

> When I was making *hijra*, I didn't know what to do, all I knew was you know I just get on the airplane and get to Istanbul because from research, tons of research, I know that all the mujahidin that come from around the world they come to Istanbul and you know Turkey and the Syrian border's close and they switch like this...I still don't know what to do. I still need to look for mujahidin, I need to look for people to help me to get to jihad in Syria...In my heart, I don't know where to start. I don't know where to begin, who to ask, you know, I was scared. I don't have money, I

don't have hotel, I don't have none of this stuff. I'm scared...I don't know what to do. Subhanallah, I see two men, three men speaking Arabic, and I said, "Subhanallah, I know what these people are here for." People speaking Arabic, they're either Syrian or you know, from tons of research, muhajirin from Tunis or I don't know where... So I didn't say nothing to them I just simply sat down and waited until they got off the train. When they got off I was going to speak to them. It was very dangerous what I was doing—I could've went to jail, you know, could've been a spy... So when I got off the train, I follow them I went to ask them, "I want to make *hijra*, I want to go to jihad."[11]

After several failed efforts to randomly approach Arabic-speaking men with Salafist-style beards and ask their help in getting to Syria, Abusalha eventually came across a one-armed Turkish man who agreed to help and cheerfully acknowledged in what little Arabic he spoke, "I am from al-Qa`ida."[12]

A Wave of American Recruits
Recruits headed to jihadist factions in Syria have likewise come from the West Coast of the United States. In late 2012, a local Muslim convert from Garden Grove, California, Sinh Vinh Ngo Nguyen (also known as Hasan Abu Omar Ghannoum), traveled to Syria where he joined Islamist forces and spent four months in combat near the town of Qusayr. In late January 2013, he posted an update on his status to friends on Facebook: "I'm doing well in Syria...having a blast here, and I mean literally."[13] Nguyen later acknowledged to the FBI that while in Syria he had "offered to train some of the al-Qa`ida fighters" from Jabhat al-Nusra who he had "fought alongside" and "greatly admired."[14] After returning to the United States for six months, U.S. law enforcement arrested Nguyen as he attempted to travel to Peshawar, Pakistan, via Mexico in October 2013. He later pleaded guilty to charges of conspiring to travel to an al-Qa`ida

4 Elaine Ganley, "2 French Girls Investigated as Would-Be Jihadis," Associated Press, August 22, 2014.

5 *Dabiq Magazine* 3, al-Hayat Media Center, August 2014, p. 27.

6 "Islamic State's Taunting Speech Calls for Killing Civilians," *Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 2014.

7 "The Story of an American Muhajir in Al-Sham: A Special Meeting with the Mujahid Shahid Abu Hurayra Al-Amriki," The Global Islamic Media Front, July 28, 2014.

8 Ibid.

9 "Interview with Abu Huraira Ameriki. Part 1: The Hijrah," Bilad al-Sham Media, August 29, 2014.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 This post was available on Facebook.

14 *U.S.A. v. Sinh Vinh Ngo Nguyen*, Central District of California, 2013.

training camp in Pakistan to assist in providing paramilitary training and instruction. Nguyen admitted that, after fighting alongside Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria, he was infatuated with the desire to "return to jihad," believing "that this was what he was born to do."[15]

Ironically, neither Nguyen and Abusalha were recruited or fighting on behalf of ISIL—but rather were drawn to al-Qa`ida's official franchise in the region, Jabhat al-Nusra, which is engaged in a bitter and violent dispute with ISIL and, until recently, has not been considered as potent an international threat as ISIL. Yet, since the latest wave of conquest by ISIL over vast regions of Syria and Iraq, the weight of Western recruitment seems to have swayed firmly in its direction. On July 2, 2014, FBI agents stopped 20-year-old Los Angeles native Adam Dandach from boarding a flight at John Wayne Airport in Orange County, California, headed to Istanbul. He allegedly told the agents that he intended to travel to Syria to "assist ISIS [ISIL] with anything ISIS asked him to do, and that he believed the killings of U.S. soldiers are justified killings."[16] According to a criminal complaint filed in his case, Dandach later told his brother that "he was more disappointed that he did not get to go to Syria than getting in trouble with law enforcement."[17]

Interestingly, not all of the would-be American recruits in Syria and Iraq are male. On September 10, 2014, 19-year-old Colorado resident Shannon Maureen Conley pleaded guilty to providing material support to ISIL after being recruited online by an individual who described himself as "an active member" of ISIL.[18] Even prior to her eventual arrest, Conley had freely told FBI agents during interviews that she "planned to go to Iraq" to "find a jihadist training camp." After the agents encouraged her to instead participate in peaceful support for Muslims in Syria and Iraq, Conley

replied that she had "no interest in doing humanitarian work" and "felt that jihad is the only answer to correct the wrongs against the Muslim world."[19] She admitted that she was in intimate contact with a 32-year-old Tunisian national working for ISIL, as well as another woman who had married an ISIL militant. When asked if she intended to actually engage in jihad, she responded, "If it was absolutely necessary, then yes...I would do it." She admitted that her knowledge of Islam and ISIL were drawn solely from "research that she conducted on the internet."[20] On April 8, 2014, after multiple attempts by the FBI to intervene and dissuade her from pursuing her mission, agents finally arrested Conley at Denver International Airport as she attempted to board a flight to Turkey via Frankfurt. In her possession were materials for providing first aid as well as "a number of CD/DVDs labeled 'Anwar al-`Awlaqi.'"[21] According to Conley's own public defender, her arrest by the FBI "may very well have saved her life."[22]

ISIL is even now drawing American recruits away from other competing jihadist factions globally, including various official branches of al-Qa`ida. This has become clear in Minnesota, where reports indicate that ethnic Somali men who might once have been lured by the cultural appeal of al-Qa`ida's al-Shabab affiliate in East Africa are now instead heading to the unlikely destination of Syria. A federal grand jury in the Minneapolis area is reportedly looking into allegations that as many as 30 young Somali-Americans were encouraged to travel by unknown parties to Syria to join ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra over the past two years, including a 19-year-old woman from St. Paul.[23] The numbers and facts are startling—and yet U.S. nationals are only the tip of a much larger iceberg. In the last year alone, fighters from the United Kingdom, Canada, Norway, Finland, Sweden,

the Netherlands, France, and many other countries have joined the ranks of extremist groups in Syria, creating a frenzy among law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

Recruitment Beyond U.S. Borders
As was vividly evidenced by ISIL's execution videos of American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, the United Kingdom faces an increasingly complex problem stemming from its nationals who have traveled to Syria. For some of these individuals, Syria is merely the latest chapter in their process of radicalization. In February 2014, British national Abdul Waheed Majid (also known as Abu Sulaiman al-Muhajir)—who reportedly once served as a personal aide and driver for extremist cleric Shaykh Omar Bakri Mohammed—blew himself up in a suicide bombing targeting the infamous Aleppo Central Prison in order to spearhead a pitched ground assault by Jabhat al-Nusra.[24] The operation, which was the first known case of a British suicide bomber in Syria, reportedly led to the escape of hundreds of prisoners. In a subsequent interview with British media, Omar Bakri praised Majid as "a very dear brother": "He was someone who was always at hand to help people... He was also very interested in the issue of how we could establish an Islamic state."[25]

On June 19, 2014, the same English-language ISIL media unit responsible for releasing the James Foley beheading video, the al-Hayat Media Center, published a video titled *There is No Life Without Jihad*, featuring recorded English-language interviews with several British jihadists, including two young men of Yemeni and Indian descent. Briton Abu Muthanna al-Yemeni boasted, "we understand no borders...we have participated in battles in al-Sham and we'll go to Iraq in a few days and we'll fight there...We'll even go to Jordan and Lebanon, with no problems—wherever our shaykh wants to send us." Openly addressing ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Abu Muthanna urged him, "be firm and don't change at all. Allah

15 Ibid.

16 *U.S.A. v. Adam Dandach*, Central District of California, 2014.

17 Ibid.

18 "Arvada Woman Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to a Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization," U.S. Department of Justice, September 10, 2014.

19 *U.S.A. v. Shannon Maureen Conley*, District of Colorado, 2014.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 "Colorado Woman, 19, Pleads Guilty to Trying to Help Islamic State," NBC News, September 10, 2014.

23 Paul McEnroe and Allie Shah, "Federal Grand Jury Targets Local Terrorist Pipeline," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, September 6, 2014.

24 "The Martyrdom-Seeker Abu Sulayman Al-Muhajir," Jabhat al-Nusra, February 6, 2014.

25 Haroon Siddique, "Suspected British Suicide Bomber Was My Student, Says Radical Cleric," *Guardian*, February 13, 2014.

willing, we are with you…throw us wherever you want."[26] For his part, "Abu Bara al-Hindi" directed a message to "my brothers who are living in the West": "I know how you feel in the heart; you feel depressed. The prophet said the cure for the depression is jihad for the cause of Allah. You feel like you have no honor…my brothers, come to jihad and feel the honor we're feeling. Feel the happiness we're feeling."[27] When the lonely girlfriend of another reported British jihadist fighting in Syria, Aine Davis, begged him during internet chats to return home to the United Kingdom, Davis wrote back and scoffed, "You think I spent two months on the road to get where I am to come back? (rofl)."[28]

The ISIL video *There is No Life Without Jihad* featured other Westerners fighting in Syria, including Australians "Abu Yahya al-Shami" and "Abu Nour al-Iraqi." Abu Nour admonished his "brothers in the West" that "the reasons to come to jihad are plenty. Shaykh Anwar al-`Awlaqi once said that when it comes to jihad, there are two types of people: those who find every single excuse to come to jihad and those who find every single excuse not to come to jihad. For those who want to come to jihad, who want the reward, there are many excuses, many reasons to come to jihad, in the lands of al-Sham especially."[29] In fact, one of Jabhat al-Nusra's most senior Shari`a officials, Mustafa Mahamed (also known as Abu Sulayman al-Muhajir), is likewise an Australian national.[30]

The English-language al-Hayat Media Center has also released video footage of a Canadian convert to Islam, Andre Poulin, who was recently killed while fighting alongside ISIL in Syria. In his recorded testimonial, Poulin recalled, "I was like any other regular Canadian; I watched hockey, I went to cottage in the summertime, I loved to fish, I wanted to go hunting, I liked outdoors, I liked sports…life in Canada was good. I had money, I had good family, but at

the end of the day…how can you answer to Allah the Almighty when you live on the same street, when using their lights and paying taxes to them, and they use these taxes for war on Islam?"[31] Like his British comrades, Poulin offered a message to Muslims living in the West and appealed to them to make *hijra* to Syria to join ISIL. According to Poulin:

> You know, there's a role for everybody. Every person can contribute something to the Islamic State. It's obligatory on us. If you cannot fight, then you give money, if you cannot give money then you can assist in technology, and if you can't assist in technology you can use some other skills…We can use you. You'll be very well taken care of here. Your families will live here in safety just like how it is back home. You know, we have wide expansive territory here in Syria and we can easily find accommodations for you and your families. My brothers, there is a role for everybody here in Syria… come join before the doors close.[32]

Even a famous German rapper, Denis Mamadou Gerhard Cuspert (also known as "Deso Dogg"), traveled to fight in Syria and has since joined ISIL's banner under the name Abu Talha al-Almani. In 2009, the onetime street criminal Cuspert suddenly "changed my life" and abandoned his music career to dedicate himself to becoming a hardline Islamist. By August 2013, he had made his way to Syria.[33] With his celebrity status, Deso Dogg has been featured in ISIL propaganda and has drawn a following of thousands via his online social media posts from the jihadist frontline in Syria. Using Twitter, he posts frequent battlefield updates in both English and German, including images and videos. Cuspert is one of more than 240 German nationals who were known to be fighting in Syria by the end of last year alone.[34]

Assessing the Potential Threat

Some analysts and observers have correctly argued that not all Western foreign fighters in Syria are there on behalf of Jabhat al-Nusra, ISIL, or analogous hardline jihadist groups. They have also suggested that these Western recruits will likely meet their demise during combat in Iraq and Syria and pose only a small residual terrorist threat to countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and other Western states. With measures in place to cancel passports and travel documents for those suspected to be fighting in Syria, perhaps these individuals will not even be able to return home. While these points are all worth noting, it is simply not clear what activities these individuals might engage in once they return home.

One of the Western hostages once held in Syria alongside James Foley—French journalist Nicolas Henin—has since been freed and has publicly identified at least one of their former rebel captors: a 29-year-old foreign jihadist from Roubaix, France, named Mehdi Nemmouche. According to Henin, Nemmouche earned a reputation as a "violent and provocative" thug who took pleasure in torturing hostages. He recounted how Nemmouche once punched him in the face and flashed a new pair of gloves: "You saw these motorcycle gloves? I bought them just for you, to punch you in the face. Did you like them?" As for his victims, Henin insisted, "It seemed to us that he did not leave for Syria because of some grand ideals but, above all, to make his mark, to carry out a murderous path that he had traced."[35] As an example, Henin quoted Nemmouche as boasting, "It's such a pleasure to cut off a baby's head."[36]

After spending nearly a year marauding across Syria, Nemmouche finally returned home to Europe via Germany in March 2014.[37] Despite being under surveillance by French authorities, two months later, in late May, he was arrested for allegedly carrying out

26 *There is No Life Without Jihad*, al-Hayat Media Center, June 19, 2014.

27 Ibid.

28 "Woman Free after Syria Cash Trial," *Daily Mail*, August 14, 2014.

29 *There is No Life Without Jihad*.

30 See the account at www.twitter.com/abusulayman321.

31 *Al-Ghuraba: The Chosen Few of Different Lands*, al-Hayat Media Center, July 11, 2014.

32 Ibid.

33 Paltalk interview with Abu Talha al-Almani.

34 Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson, "'Jihad Tourism': From Germany to the Syrian Battlefield," National Public Radio, December 22, 2013.

35 Sylvie Corbet and Lori Hinnant, "French Ex-Hostage Says Tortured in Syria By Brussels Shooting Suspect Mehdi Nemmouche," Associated Press, September 6, 2014.

36 David Chazan, "Brussels Museum Shooting Suspect 'Beheaded Baby,'" *Telegraph*, September 7, 2014.

37 "Brussels Jewish Museum Murders: Nemmouche to be Extradited," BBC, June 26, 2014.

a mass shooting targeting a Jewish museum in Brussels, Belgium, that killed four people. At the time of his capture in Marseilles, Nemmouche was reportedly in possession of an AK-47 rifle and handgun that were used in the museum attack, "a white sheet emblazoned with the name of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant," and a 40-second video featuring the two guns and the ISIL banner, as well as a claim of responsibility for the attack.[38] Thus far, authorities in both Belgium and France have not answered the bigger question of whether the plot targeting the Jewish museum was carried out on the direct orders of ISIL leaders, or if the accused culprit was merely inspired by the example set by ISIL.

Only weeks before Nemmouche's fateful return to Europe, French security forces arrested another veteran of the jihadist frontline in Syria, French national Ibrahim Boudina, shortly after his own return home. The latter had initially fled to Syria in September 2012 after a close associate tossed a grenade into a Jewish grocery in the Sarcelles neighborhood of Paris. Upon arriving, Boudina allegedly first joined the ranks of Jabhat al-Nusra and eventually drifted to ISIL.[39] A friend reportedly warned French authorities: "Ibrahim said if he could not do jihad on Islamic soil he would do it in France. Ibrahim compared France to the head of the serpent, which you had to cut off… Ibrahim spoke to me often about this Zionist area in Cannes and that if he could not go do jihad overseas it would for him be a target."[40] After fighting for 15 months, Boudina attempted to reenter Europe through Greece in January 2014—where border police found a USB stick in his possession with bomb-making instructions. A later search of a storage closet in the apartment complex near Cannes where Boudina was hiding turned up a handgun, more bomb-making instructions, and several aluminum cans filled with 950 grams of TATP high explosive—at least one of which was covered in screws and nails, apparently to serve as shrapnel.[41]

Conclusion

These incidents reveal the nature of the dilemma posed by ISIL to the United States and its Western allies. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies are confronted with the challenge of closely monitoring a relatively large and decentralized network of radicalized extremists with paramilitary training. This does not even include the inevitable number of additional Westerners who will slip through unnoticed as they join the conflict and are recruited by ISIL, Jabhat al-Nusra, or al-Qa`ida's Khorasan group. These young men (and women) see nothing wrong with the brutal murder of civilians, and they have taken every opportunity to proclaim their commitment not only to the frontline in Syria and Iraq, but to the more expansive global jihad against the West. Thus, even a small number of hardened fanatics returning home from Syria could pose a significant threat.

In this regard, it is worth noting that the Islamic State of Iraq (ISIL's predecessor) released an audio recording of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in July 2012, in which he solemnly vowed that Americans would soon witness terrorist attacks "in the heart of your homeland, as our war with you has just begun, and so await them."[42] Even more explicitly, on September 21, ISIL's top spokesman Abu Mohammed al-Adnani addressed the American and European publics, threatening that ISIL would "come to your homeland" and "strike you."[43] The recording came only three days after Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott warned of intelligence indicating that local militants had planned random "demonstration killings" on the streets of Australia in the name of ISIL. In light of these stark facts, it is clear why Western governments have grown so concerned about the focused recruitment of their own nationals by ISIL and other jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq.

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New Developments in Australian Foreign Fighter Activity

By Andrew Zammit

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS CONTINUE to join jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq, and this trend has been identified as a national security priority. In mid-September 2014, the Australian federal government raised the National Terrorism Public Alert from "medium" to "high," citing the foreign fighter threat.[1] Within a week, the country experienced its largest ever counterterrorism operation, when a series of raids by more than 800 federal and state police officers uncovered an alleged terrorist plot, reportedly instigated by a senior Australian member of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).[2] Security was also enhanced at the Parliament House following "chatter" about a potential attack.[3]

This article details developments in Australian jihadist activity in Syria and Iraq during the past year, updating an article from the November 2013 issue of the *CTC Sentinel*.[4] It outlines the changing threat within Australia, as well as some of the countermeasures enacted by the Australian government. It finds that Australia faces an increasingly complex threat. Australian citizens continue to be involved in ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra, including in senior positions, and potential domestic plots have been uncovered. The Australian federal government has responded to the evolving threat with increased security measures, extra resources for police and intelligence services, and

38 "France Arrests Syria Jihad Suspects as Nemmouche Held," BBC, June 2, 2014.

39 Anne Vidalie, "Djihadisme: Ibrahim Boudina, itinéraire d'un fou d'Allah," *L'Express*, June 23, 2014.

40 Paul Cruickshank, "Raid on ISIS Suspect in the French Riviera," CNN, August 28, 2014.

41 Vidalie.

42 "A Speech by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: 'And Allah Refuses But to Complete His Light,'" al-Furqan Media Center, July 21, 2012.

43 "'You will not feel secure even in your bedrooms,'" *Toronto Star*, September 22, 2014.

1 Latika Bourke and Lisa Cox, "Terror Risk High: Tony Abbott Announces Increase in National Terrorism Public Alert System," *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 12, 2014.

2 Karl Hoerr and Lucy Carter, "Senior Australian Islamic State Member 'Arranged for Random Beheadings in Sydney, Brisbane'; Omarjan Azari, Believed to be Involved in Alleged Plot, Faces Court," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, September 18, 2014.

3 "AFP to Take Over Parliament House Security After 'Chatter' About Possible Terrorist Attack; Investigation into Thwarted 'Beheading Plot' Continues," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, September 21, 2014.

4 Andrew Zammit, "Tracking Australian Foreign Fighters in Syria," *CTC Sentinel* 6:11 (2013).

a problematic push for extensive new powers.

New Australian Martyrs

The Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) recently estimated that 60 Australians are currently fighting in Syria and Iraq, that "tens" have returned, and that 15 have died fighting.[5] At least six of these deaths occurred in the past year and were publicly reported, providing some information on who has been involved and what militant groups they joined.[6]

In mid-January 2014, Yusuf Ali and his wife Amira Ali were killed in Aleppo. Initial reports said that they were killed by the Free Syrian Army (FSA).[7] More detailed follow-up reporting, however, stated that the couple was affiliated with Jabhat al-Nusra, and that they were killed by ISIL as part of the power struggle between the two jihadist groups.[8] Yusuf Ali was born to a Christian family in Australia and spent his teenage years in the United States, while Amira Ali was of Lebanese and New Zealand background and was raised in Australia.[9] They had married in April 2013, lived in Queensland before traveling to Syria, and were both 22-years-old when killed.[10]

Also in January, Caner Temel was killed in Syria. He was reportedly recruited into ISIL by a man known as Abu Hafs,

after first joining Jabhat al-Nusra.[11] He was 22-years-old, from Sydney, and of Turkish background.[12] He was also a veteran, having joined the Australian Army in February 2009, and he trained as a combat engineer before going absent without leave in late 2010.[13]

In mid-February 2013, a Sydney man named Ahmad Moussali was killed in Syria.[14] Moussali was Lebanese-Australian and a close friend of the aforementioned Yusuf Ali. Little is known about his involvement, other than that he had studied Arabic in Egypt in 2012 before entering Syria in 2013.[15]

Zakaryah Raad, an Australian man from Sydney, was killed soon after appearing in an ISIL video in June 2014 titled *There is No Life Without Jihad*, which called for Muslims across the globe to join ISIL.[16]

In July 2014, ISIL announced that an "Abu Bakr al-Australi" had carried out a suicide bombing in central Baghdad. He was later identified as Adam Dahman, an 18-year-old man from Melbourne who had left for Turkey when he was 17.[17] He attacked a market in central Baghdad near a Shi`a mosque, killing five people.[18] Dahman is the second known Australian suicide bomber, the first being Abu Asma al-Australi who

bombed a school stationing Syrian soldiers near Deir al-Zour in September 2013.

Foreign Fighter Flow

The composition of the Australians involved in Syria and Iraq has changed little since November 2013. Judging from those killed, they tend to be male, under 30-years-of-age (often under 25), from a range of backgrounds (predominantly Lebanese-Australian followed by Turkish-Australian), in some cases have wives and children, and in most cases had attracted security attention before leaving Australia.[19]

A key change since November 2013, however, has been that many have joined ISIL and went to fight in Iraq. Previously, Australian fighters tended to operate within Syria, fighting either for Jabhat al-Nusra or groups that fell loosely under the FSA rubric.[20] There are still Australians who fought with Jabhat al-Nusra, such as a former Gold Coast resident who has called for attacks within Western countries, but overall ISIL appears to have overtaken Jabhat al-Nusra in popularity.[21]

A further change has been increasing evidence of Australian jihadists playing leadership roles. One example is former Sydney preacher Abu Sulayman, who is now a member of Jabhat al-Nusra's Shari`a Council. Sulayman has stated that he was appointed by al-Qa`ida to mediate between Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIL.[22] He has appeared in several Jabhat al-Nusra videos, and has become their most prominent English-speaking member to address the fratricidal dispute.[23]

In July 2014, the Lebanese Army arrested a Lebanese-Australian dual citizen named Hussam Sabbagh, who has been accused of playing a major role in Jabhat al-Nusra networks in

5 Peter Hartcher, "The Real Terrorism Threat Lurks in the Indonesian Shadows," *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 12, 2014. Of these 15 individuals, 14 "had fought on the Sunni side."

6 Information on the publicly reported deaths of Australians in the Syrian conflict prior to November 2013 can be found in: Zammit "Tracking Australian Foreign Fighters in Syria."

7 Clementine Cuneo, "Family and Friends Gather at Sydney Mosque to Remember Slain Muslim Woman Amira Karroum and Her husband Yusuf Ali," *Daily Telegraph*, January 14, 2014.

8 Sean Rubinsztein-Dunlop, "Amira Karroum and Tyler Casey: How a Young Australian Couple Came to Die in Syria," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, September 9, 2014.

9 Ibid.; Bridie Jabour, "Family of Australian Woman Believed Killed in Syria Seek Return of Body," *Guardian*, January 14, 2014.

10 Cuneo; Suzanne Dredge and Matt Wordsworth, "Yusuf Ali, Australian Man Killed in Syria, Had Links to Al Qaeda, Court Documents Allege," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, January 17, 2014.

11 Matt Brown, "Militant Says Australian Jihadist Caner Temel was Shot in Head by Rebel Sniper After Syria Siege," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, January 22, 2014.

12 "Caner Temel Memorial: Service Held for Australian Man Killed while Fighting in Syria's Civil War," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, January 18, 2014.

13 Amanda Hoh, "Caner Temel Killed in Syria Revealed as Former Australian Soldier," *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 19, 2014.

14 Neil Keene, "Sydney Man and Roadside Preacher Ahmad Moussalli Killed in Syria," *Daily Telegraph*, February 11, 2014.

15 Rachel Olding, "How 'Lion' Ahmad Moussalli Died in Syrian War a Mystery," *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 20, 2014. Ahmed Moussali's close friendship with Yusuf Ali suggests that if he was involved with any jihadist group in the conflict, it may also have been ISIL.

16 Megan Levy, "Australian Man Zakaryah Raad 'Died Fighting with ISIL Militants,'" *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 23, 2014.

17 James Dowling and Alex White, "Suicide Bomber Adam Dahman was Led Astray," *Herald Sun*, July 30, 2014.

18 Simon Cullen, "Australian Suicide Bomber in Iraq was an 18-year-old Man from Melbourne," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, July 21, 2014.

19 Dataset maintained by the author.

20 Zammit, "Tracking Australian Foreign Fighters in Syria."

21 Mark Schliebs, "Jihadist Urges Kidnap of Western VIPs," *Australian*, June 11, 2014.

22 Thomas Joscelyn, "Al Qaeda Official in Syria was Extremist Preacher in Australia," *The Long War Journal*, March 21, 2014.

23 Andrew Zammit, "Syria: A Fractured Opposition and Australian Consequences," *The Strategist*, April 24, 2014.

Lebanon.[24] Prior to his alleged Jabhat al-Nusra activity, he had been accused of involvement in Fatah al-Islam's attempted uprising in the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp, near Tripoli, in 2007.[25] Lebanese media reports suggest he has since come to command a 250-strong militia.[26]

The Domestic Threat to Australia
Not all Australian involvement in these conflicts requires travel. ASIO currently estimates that around 100 people in Australia are supporting jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq in various capacities, such as by providing funds and equipment.[27] While this is largely a continuation of previous activity, the domestic situation has changed in three key ways during the past year.

First, there is growing evidence of active recruitment networks within Australia. Many of the Australian fighters prior to November 2013 appeared to be entering Syria with few pre-existing connections to armed groups, but since then two alleged recruitment networks have been uncovered. In December 2013, two men were arrested in Sydney and charged with offenses under the Crimes (Foreign Incursions and Recruitment) Act of 1978. Police alleged that one of the men, Hamdi Alqudsi, was closely linked to extremist groups in Syria and had recruited at least six fighters, including Yusuf Ali and Caner Temel, and facilitated their travel.[28] Police alleged the other man, Mohammed Amin, was preparing to join the fight. Alqudsi had allegedly cooperated with Mohammad Ali Baryalei, a former Sydney bouncer now believed to be a senior ISIL figure. Authorities believe Baryalei recruited approximately 30 Australians, first for Jabhat al-Nusra and then for ISIL.[29]

Then, in September 2014, two members of an alleged recruitment network for Jabhat al-Nusra were arrested in Brisbane, one of whom is believed to be the brother of the suicide bomber "Abu Asma al-Australi."[30]

Second, several of the newly apparent fighters have close connections to past extremist violence in Australia. In contrast, many of the known fighters in 2012 and 2013 appeared to have had little involvement in Australia's most serious jihadist networks. The two most prominent examples of this new trend are Khaled Sharrouf and Mohamed Elomar, two ISIL fighters who have drawn repeated media attention by making threatening statements toward Australia and posting photos online of themselves posing with murdered captives and severed heads.[31] When Sharrouf released a photo of his seven-year-old son holding a severed head, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry described it as underscoring "the degree to which ISIL is so far beyond the pale with respect to any standard by which we judge even terrorist groups."[32] Sharrouf and Elomar were closely connected to earlier jihadist activity in Australia. Sharrouf was a convicted terrorist, having been arrested in November 2005 as part of Operation Pendennis, a joint ASIO, federal police and state police investigation that foiled two terrorist cells in Melbourne and Sydney.[33] He pleaded guilty to a small role in the plot (attempting to procure timers for

the explosives) and was released from prison in 2009.[34] He continued to attract the attention of police and security agencies before escaping to Syria using his brother's passport.[35]

Sharrouf's fighting companion, Mohamed Elomar, is the nephew of the Sydney Pendennis cell's leader, and one of his uncles (Hussein Elomar) was convicted of terrorism offenses in Lebanon.[36] His brother, Ahmed Elomar, was briefly detained in Lebanon in 2007 and would later be convicted of jihadist-related violence in Sydney.[37]

Other examples of this changing dynamic include Adam Dahman, the Australian suicide bomber in Iraq. He was the brother-in-law of Ahmed Raad, who had been a member of the Melbourne Pendennis cell and acted as their treasurer.[38] Similarly, Zakariyah Raad was related to two members of the Melbourne Pendennis cell and had been involved in violence in Sydney.[39] Another relative, Mounir Raad, currently claims to be in Aleppo with ISIL.[40] Amari Ali, who was killed in Aleppo, was the cousin of Melbourne Pendennis cell member Fadl Sayadi.[41] Some other members and associates of

24 "Saqr Preps for Tripoli Militant Prosecution," *Daily Star*, July 25, 2014.

25 Shandon Harris-Hogan and Andrew Zammit, "The Unseen Terrorist Connection: Exploring Jihadist Links Between Lebanon and Australia," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26:3 (2014).

26 "Saqr Preps for Tripoli Militant Prosecution."

27 David Irvine, "Diligence in the Shadows — ASIO's Responsibility," Address to the National Press Club, August 27, 2014.

28 Rachel Olding, "Alleged Recruiter Faces Charges of Finding Men to Join Syria Terrorists," *Sydney Morning Herald*, December 4, 2013.

29 Sean Rubinsztein-Dunlop, "Mohammad Ali Baryalei:

AFP Issues Arrest Warrant for Islamic State Jihadist Accused of Sending Australians to Syria, Iraq Conflict," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, September 9, 2014.

30 "Two Men Accused of Terrorism-Related Offences Remanded in Custody," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, September 12, 2014.

31 David Wroe, "Jihadist Threat to Diggers," *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 5, 2014; Rachel Olding, "Jihadi Khaled Sharrouf Says he Would Have Launched Attack in Australia," *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 1, 2014; Mark Schliebs and Paul Maley, "Aussie Jihadi in Iraqi Executions," *Australian*, June 21, 2014; Rachel Olding, "AFP Issues Warrants for Australian ISIL Fighters Khaled Sharrouf and Mohamed Elomar," *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 29, 2014.

32 "Kerry Calls Severed Head Photo Among 'Most Grotesque' Ever," Agence France-Presse, August 12, 2014.

33 Bart Schuurman, Shandon Harris-Hogan, Pete Lentini and Andrew Zammit, "Operation Pendennis: A Case Study of an Australian Terrorist Plot," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8:4 (2014).

34 *Regina (C'Wealth) v. Sharrouf*, New South Wales Supreme Court, 2009.

35 Paul Kent, "Terrorist Khaled Sharrouf's Anger in Car Parking Dispute," *Daily Telegraph*, December 22, 2011; Nick Ralston, Nick McKenzie and Richard Baker, "Union Bribes Revealed," *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 10, 2014; Janet Fife-Yeomans, "23 Australians Placed on a US Terror Watch List," *Perth Now*, August 31, 2011; Yoni Bashan, "A Convicted Terrorist has Exposed Security Gaps at Sydney Airport After Boarding a Flight to Syria on his Brother's Passport," *Sunday Telegraph*, February 8, 2014.

36 Debra Jopson, "Family Links Strong in Australian Cells," *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 6, 2012.

37 Greg Bearup and Paul Maley, "How a Regular Suburban Kid Put his Faith in a Killer Cult," *Australian*, August 9, 2014.

38 Dowling and White.

39 Dylan Welch and Sean Rubinsztein-Dunlop, "The Australian Who's a Key Figure in the Fighting in Iraq," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, June 30, 2014; Lisa Davies, "Sydney Sharia Whipping Case: Man Jailed for Dishing Out 40 Lashes," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 14, 2013.

40 Mark Schliebs, "Aussie Trio Align with IS Fighters," *Australian*, August 30, 2014.

41 Rubinsztein-Dunlop, "Amira Karroum and Tyler Casey: How a Young Australian Couple Came to Die in Syria."

the Pendennis cells are suspected of fighting in the region.[42]

The third and most serious change in the domestic situation is new evidence of violent plans by ISIL supporters. On September 18, 2014, federal and state police forces raided houses across Brisbane and Sydney, arresting 15 people of whom one has so far been charged. While little information is currently available, the plot was reportedly instigated by Australian ISIL recruiter Mohammad Ali Baryalei and involved a plan to kidnap and murder a randomly chosen non-Muslim member of the Australian public, film the killing, and place the video on social media.[43] Then, on September 23, two police officers arranged to meet a suspect in a carpark outside a Victoria Police station. The suspect was an 18-year-old man named Abdul Numan Haider, whose passport had been confiscated because of potential plans to join ISIL. When approached by the officers, Haider attacked them with a knife, although one of the officers managed to shoot and kill him. The incident, and whether it was pre-planned by Haider, is still being investigated.[44]

State Response
Australia has enacted a series of countermeasures in response to escalating jihadist activity. In addition to foiling a suspected terrorist plot and disrupting suspected recruitment networks in Sydney and Brisbane, federal police also arrested Mohamed Elomar's wife, Fatima, at Sydney Airport. She was accused of attempting to bring supplies to her husband and is facing trial.[45]

Federal police have also issued warrants for the arrests of Khaled Sharrouf, Mohamed Elomar and Mohammad Ali Baryalei.[46] Another measure has been passport confiscations, with ASIO canceling around 45 passports in the last financial year, compared to 18 in the previous year and less than 10 in most of the preceding years.[47]

The threat has now become a major political issue, with the prime minister and senior MPs continually addressing the concern in public statements. The attorney-general has described it as "the government's number-one national security priority."[48] The federal government has granted $630 million in extra funding, over four years, to organizations such as the Australian Federal Police, ASIO, and the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) to tackle the foreign fighter threat.[49] The government has also raised the national terrorism alert and is currently introducing extensive new national security legislation.

This includes an amendment designed to make it easier for ASIS to spy on suspected Australian fighters overseas on ASIO's behalf by no longer requiring specific approval from the foreign minister. Also proposed are measures to make it easier for ASIO to confiscate passports and to allow prosecutions in Australia to use evidence gathered in foreign countries without the permission of the foreign government.[50]

Several of the proposed changes, however, are more contentious. These include reducing the burden of proof

required to use coercive powers such as control orders and preventative detention, and placing greater restrictions on speech by broadening the definition of promoting terrorism. Another proposed measure is to alter the traditional burden of proof for suspected foreign fighters, potentially requiring any Australian returning from designated areas in Syria and Iraq to prove they were not involved in terrorism.[51] These proposals go against the recommendations of multiple recent inquiries into counterterrorism legislation, and have encountered a strong backlash from Muslim communities and sections of the wider public.[52]

Conclusion
Australia's jihadist foreign fighters pose an ongoing and increasingly complex national security threat. Australians have continued to join jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq, with many joining ISIL. Some of the fighters have been involved in war crimes, some have made explicit threats against Australia, some have played leadership roles, and some have returned to Australia. Evidence has also emerged of active recruitment networks, connections to earlier terrorist plots, and of violent plans within Australia.

At the same time, the threat has become a greater political priority, resulting in escalating countermeasures, extra resources to security agencies, and attempts at legislative changes. Several of the proposed legislative changes, however, are highly contentious and might complicate counterterrorism efforts. The continuing foreign fighter problem has prompted a high-level response, but elements of the response pose their own problems. On the whole, the situation has substantially worsened during the past year.

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42 Alex White and Mark Dunn, "Freed Terrorists From Cell Led by Abdul Nacer Benbrika Could Still be a Threat," *Herald Sun*, June 20, 2014.

43 Cameron Stewart, "The Order to Kill that Triggered Operation Appleby," *Australian*, September 19, 2014.

44 "Melbourne Shooting: Officials Name Abdul Numan Haider as Man Shot Dead by Anti-Terrorist Officers," ABC News, September 24, 2014; Martin McKenzie-Murray, "Inside the Terror of the Suburbs," *The Saturday Paper*, September 27, 2014.

45 Peter Lloyd, "Mohamed Elomar, Husband of Fatima Elomar who was Arrested at Sydney Airport, Believed to be Fighting in Syria," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, July 8, 2014.

46 Olding, "AFP Issues Warrants for Australian ISIL Fighters Khaled Sharrouf and Mohamed Elomar"; Rubinsztein-Dunlop, "Mohammad Ali Baryalei: AFP Issues Arrest Warrant for Islamic State Jihadist Accused of Sending Australians to Syria, Iraq Conflict."

47 Dowling and White; Andrew Zammit, "A Table on ASIO's Passport Confiscation Powers," The Murphy Raid blog, October 31, 2013.

48 "Australians 'Fighting in Syria and Iraq,'" Sky News, July 2, 2014.

49 Latika Bourke and James Massola, "Tony Abbott Boosts Funding by $630m to Fight Home-grown Terrorism," *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 6, 2014.

50 Jessie Blackbourn and Nicola McGarrity, "How Reactive Law-making Will Limit the Accountability of ASIO," *Inside Story*, July 24, 2014; Sangeetha Pillai, "Foreign Fighter Passports and Prosecutions in Government's Sights," *The Conversation*, August 7, 2014.

51 Louise Yaxley, "Tony Abbott to Consider New Terrorism Measures for Australians Returning from Overseas War Zones," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, August 6, 2014.

52 Gabrielle Chan, "Tony Abbott Calls Some Muslim Groups 'Petty' and 'Foolish' for Meetings Boycott," *Guardian*, August 21, 2014.

The Combat Performance of Hamas in the Gaza War of 2014

By Jeffrey White

IN ITS WAR WITH ISRAEL in the summer of 2014, Hamas displayed a wide range of combat capabilities, including new offensive and defensive tactics.[1] Hamas' evolution on the battlefield presented serious challenges to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and, when combined with Israeli operations, made the conflict the most costly in terms of casualties and damage to Gaza since Hamas seized power in 2007.[2]

Hamas once again demonstrated that it is a learning organization. It studies its experience in battle, develops lessons, and incorporates them into its combat doctrine, forces, and operations.[3] It plays down the effects of Israeli actions publicly, does not admit losses or mistakes, and presents a face of victory. Inside the organization, however, Hamas engages in a serious learning process.[4] Major improvements by Hamas in its latest war with Israel included: enhanced range and numbers of rockets, improved protection of its military infrastructure from Israeli attack, a system of offensive and defensive tunnels, and increased effectiveness and cohesion of its ground combat forces. Taken together, these improvements allowed Hamas to conduct sustained strikes deep inside Israel, even while under siege from Israeli military operations, to conduct offensive ground actions inside Israel and to present significant opposition to Israel's ground incursion. This was a clear improvement in performance since the Hamas-Israel war in 2009.[5]

Nevertheless, Hamas also showed weaknesses within its military forces. Its rocket offensive, while disrupting life in Israel, and especially in southern Israel, caused few casualties and little damage. Its offensive tunnel system, while allowing infiltration inside Israel, did not lead to successful penetration of the border defense system, except perhaps in one case.[6] Despite the defensive tunnel system, Israeli forces caused extensive damage to Hamas' military infrastructure.[7] Hamas' ground forces, notwithstanding their upgrades, were unable to prevent IDF ground operations.

This article reviews Hamas' preparations for battle, its offensive and defensive operations, the group's lessons learned, and the likely contours of the next conflict. It finds that Hamas conducted significant offensive and defensive operations, absorbed intense attacks from the IDF, and emerged with reduced but still intact military capabilities. Hamas will study the lessons learned from this conflict to better prepare for its next military confrontation with Israel.

Hamas' Preparations for Battle

Hamas prepared for an asymmetric conflict with Israel. The group's preparation focused on three principle elements: rocket forces, ground forces, and the tunnel system.

By July 2014, Hamas' arsenal was estimated at approximately 6,000 rockets,[8] consisting primarily of short range weapons, but with hundreds of medium range and dozens of long range systems capable of reaching as far as Haifa in northern Israel.[9] Hamas' rocket forces were well prepared for the campaign, with a system of underground launchers spread across Gaza and the means of moving rockets and rocket squads to launch areas under cover.[10]

Hamas expended considerable effort into the build-up of its ground forces. These forces were to be employed offensively against Israel and defensively to prevent deep penetrations into Gaza by Israeli ground forces. Hamas organized the defensive battlefield by deploying dense systems of improvised explosive devices (IEDs)[11] and converting civilian areas to defensive localities.[12] It deployed modern anti-tank forces, mortar units, and snipers to support ground operations.

Tunnels were the third major component of Hamas' war preparations.[13] Tunnels offered cover and concealment for infrastructure, command functions and commanders, forces, weapons and ammunition. They were integral to rocket operations, increasing the difficulty for Israel in finding launch positions and launchers, and allowing launch teams a chance to escape Israeli strikes. Communications and defensive tunnels enabled movement on the battlefield and for fighting from protected positions. They supported offensive infiltration operations and defensive tactical maneuver.

In addition, much of Hamas' military infrastructure was embedded in civilian areas of Gaza.[14] This created in effect a "human dome," reducing or complicating Israel's willingness and

1 This paper focuses on Hamas' military operations and tactics. There are a number of other Palestinian organizations in the Gaza Strip with substantial military forces and capabilities, and with whom Hamas cooperated during the conflict. See Asmaa al-Ghoul, "Gaza's Armed Factions Coordinate Response to Israeli Attacks," *al-Monitor*, July 7, 2014.

2 "Scale of Gaza Destruction Unprecedented, Rehabilitation Will Cost $7.8 Billion, PA Says," Reuters, September 4, 2014.

3 Amos Yadlin, "Dealing With Hamas' Military Force Reconstruction," The Institute for National Security Studies, September 11, 2014.

4 Yoram Cohen and Jeffrey White, "Hamas in Combat: The Military Performance of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, October 2009, p. 22.

5 An unnamed Israeli intelligence officer admitted that while nothing Hamas did in the war was a surprise, the resilience of the organization was surprising. See Isabel Kershner, "Israel Says Hamas Is Hurt Significantly," *New York Times*, September 2, 2014.

6 This was the attack on the security post at Nahal Oz on July 28, 2014, in which five Israeli soldiers were killed and the Hamas squad escaped back into Gaza. See Elad Benari and Gil Ronen, "Five Soldiers Killed During Attempted Infiltration," Israel National News, July 29, 2014.

7 Yadlin.

8 Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian combat groups had their own rocket arsenals. See "Special Report: The Deadly Rocket Arsenal of Hamas," Israel Defense Forces, July 10, 2014.

9 IDF estimates for the Hamas rocket arsenal in July 2014 were: 3,900 short range systems, more than 1,600 medium range systems, and several dozen long range systems. See ibid.

10 Christa Case Bryant, "Hamas Unveils Bigger, Better Rocket Arsenal Against Israel," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 9, 2014.

11 "Hamas Booby Traps Palestinian Houses," IDF Blog, July 27, 2014.

12 "New Declassified Report Exposes Hamas Human Shield Policy," IDF Blog, August 20, 2014.

13 Shlomi Eldar, "Gaza Tunnels Take IDF by Surprise," *al-Monitor*, July 20, 2014.

14 "New Declassified Report Exposes Hamas Human Shield Policy," IDF Blog, August 20, 2014.

ability to strike them and providing a measure of protection.[15]

Offensive Operations

Hamas had two main offensive forces in the conflict: rocket units and ground combat forces. Hamas also had a naval unit for sea-borne infiltration operations.[16] Israeli reports indicated that Hamas had even prepared a unit equipped with paragliders for operations inside Israel.[17] Hamas employed nearly all types of its offensive forces in the conflict.[18]

For the first 10 days of the war, the focus was on rocket operations. Despite intensive efforts by the Israeli Air Force (IAF), rocket strikes continued throughout the war, including salvo firing and targeting deep into Israel. Even as the final cease-fire approached, Hamas was able to fire large quantities of rockets.[19] For the Palestinians, the ability to keep Israel under threat and disrupt day-to-day life were major accomplishments, with the single most dramatic success being the temporary interruption of air traffic to Ben Gurion airport on July 22, 2014[20]—although the evacuation of Israeli border settlements was perhaps the most important achievement.

According to reports from Hamas' military wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, it was able to fire some 3,600 rockets at Israel including the following types and numbers:[21]

- 11 - R160 (long-range)
- 22 - J80 (mid-range)
- 185 - M75 (mid-range)
- 64 - M55/Fajr 5 (mid-range)
- 3344 - Grad/Qassam/Katyusha/ mortar (short-range)

These numbers demonstrate that the bulk of rocket strikes fell on southern Israel, although 271 rockets were directed at central Israel. Hamas was able to modulate firing as it deemed necessary and launched salvo attacks on numerous occasions.[22] According to one Israeli account: "Analysis of the fighting indicates that rocket fire is proceeding according to preset plans, with every local commander knowing how many to launch, where to direct them and at what time each day. This decentralized method allows Hamas to continue firing even under intense pressure by the IDF."[23]

Nevertheless, Israeli active (Iron Dome) and passive (civil defense) measures limited the overall impact of the rocket offensive. Iron Dome intercepted 735 of the rockets fired at Israel that were identified as threats.[24] Israel's civil defense system was important in limiting casualties. It provided guidelines for how to respond when under attack, warning of attack, and shelter from attack.[25] The inherent inaccuracy of the rockets, successful interceptions, and civil defense measures meant that there were few Israeli casualties: seven killed and 842 wounded, including "shock" casualties by the rocket and mortar attacks.[26] Structures and property suffered physical damage, but it was quite limited.[27] Disruption of life and economic activity were substantial, especially in southern Israel.[28]

Offensive tunnels constituted the second major offensive capability of Hamas. The IDF discovered 32 offensive tunnels in the course of operations.[29] Fourteen reportedly reached into Israel and two more had exits within 500 meters of the Israeli border.[30] These tunnels were designed to allow Hamas assault squads to penetrate Israeli border defenses without detection and to attack targets inside Israel with the advantage of surprise. According to Israeli information, each tunnel was under the control of a Hamas battalion, responsible for its digging and probably operations during wartime.[31]

Hamas assault squads were relatively small[32] but heavily armed, carrying rocket-propelled grenades (RPG), light machine guns, assault rifles, and hand grenades. Hamas personnel in some cases wore IDF uniforms to increase confusion and hesitation on the part of IDF soldiers.[33] Offensive tunnels sometimes also contained equipment for hostage taking[34] (plastic handcuffs, anesthetics), and in one case three motorcycles were found, probably intended to facilitate movement inside Israel.[35]

Hamas executed six tunnel-based infiltration operations during the war with limited success.[36] Assault squads penetrated the border and in four cases

15 "How is the IDF Minimizing Harm to Civilians in Gaza?" IDF Blog, July 16, 2014.

16 Mohammed Najib, "IDF Repels New Hamas Naval Commandos," *IHS Jane's Defense Weekly*, July 9, 2014.

17 "Israeli Strike on Hamas Leader Raed Attar Foiled Gaza-Area Paraglider Attack – 'Attar's Assassination Has Disrupted Everything,'" *Algemeiner*, September 1, 2014.

18 The paraglider unit was not used in the conflict probably because the IDF disrupted it with its attack on the unit's leader. See ibid.

19 "News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (August 26-September 2, 2014)," The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, September 2, 2014.

20 "Flights Cancelled Into Israel's Ben Gurion International Airport As Rocket Falls Nearby," *Forbes*, July 22, 2014.

21 This was posted on @qassam_arabic1, August 27, 2014.

22 See, for example, Yaakov Lappin, "IDF Completes Withdrawal from Gaza, Keeps Forces Massed on Border," *Jerusalem Post*, August 5, 2014.

23 Amos Harel, "Hamas is Trying to Get Itself Out of a Tight Spot," *Haaretz*, August 24, 2014.

24 Ben Hartman, "50 Days of Israel's Gaza Operation, Protective Edge – By the Numbers," *Jerusalem Post*, August 28, 2014.

25 See Israel Home Front Command website at www. oref.org.il/894-en/Pakar.aspx.

26 Ben Hartman, "71st Israeli Fatality of Gazawar: Man Succumbs to Wounds From Rocket Attack," *Jerusalem Post*, August 29, 2014.

27 Zvi Zrahiya, "As Fighting Eases, Gaza Conflict Cost Seen Totalling $8 Nillion," *Haaretz*, August 6, 2014.

28 Ibid.

29 Jeremy Binnie, "IDF Detail the Damage Inflicted on Gaza Militants," *IHS Jane's Defense Weekly*, August 8, 2014.

30 Ibid.

31 Yaakov Lappin, "Analysis: The Hidden Picture in Gaza," *Jerusalem Post*, July 31, 2014.

32 The largest groups were 13-man squads involved in the July 18 and July 19, 2014, infiltrations. See Joshua Mitnick, Nicholas Casey and Tamer El-Ghobashy, "Hamas Fighters Infiltrate Israel Through Tunnel and Kill Two Soldiers," *Wall Street Journal*, July 19, 2014.

33 Mitch Ginsburg, "Hamas Will Start Tunnelling as Soon as we Leave," *Times of Israel*, July 27, 2014.

34 Mitnick et al.

35 "Israeli Forces Unearth 'Terror Motorcycles' From Alleged Hamas Tunnel in New Video," *Telegraph*, August 4, 2014.

36 David Horovitz, "Israel Might Have Won; Hamas Certainly Lost," *Times of Israel*, August 6, 2014. Hamas also attempted a seaborne infiltration attempt along Israel's coast near Zikim. This was detected by Israeli naval observers and the infiltration unit was destroyed. See Yaakov Lappin, "Watch: IDF Kills 5 Hamas Terrorists Attempting to Infiltrate from the Sea," *Jerusalem Post*, July 8, 2014.

they engaged Israeli forces. Hamas attempted to ambush Israeli forces and patrols using anti-tank weapons against vehicles. In these clashes, 11 Israeli soldiers were killed.[37] The most successful action occurred on July 29, 2014, when infiltrators surprised an Israeli security post at Nahal Oz in an apparent hostage-taking attempt.[38] Five IDF soldiers were killed with possibly only one Hamas combatant killed or wounded.[39]

Israel's system of security fences, surveillance and patrols was generally effective in countering the infiltration actions, but the attempts inflicted casualties on Israeli forces and contributed to the sense of insecurity among the border settlements.[40]

Throughout the conflict, Hamas used mortars and short range rockets, especially the 107mm type, in an artillery role. These weapons were used to bombard border settlements,[41] IDF force concentrations on both sides of the border,[42] Israeli military posts,[43] and to support tunnel infiltration attempts.[44]

Defensive Operations
Defensive operations included resistance to Israeli ground force penetration into Gaza and counterattacks on Israeli forces inside Gaza. Defensive operations also served as the shield behind which Hamas could launch rockets and mortars against Israel.

Hamas deployed six "brigades" of between 2,500 and 3,500 men for defense of the Gaza Strip.[45] Each brigade was responsible for a sector of the front with Israel.[46] Brigades were apparently grouped together under a regional commander.[47] Each brigade probably had a mix of forces including rocket and mortar units, anti-tank units, snipers, and infantry.[48]

Hamas forces engaged in a number of types of defensive action.

Close Combat
Close combat involved direct fire engagements between Hamas and Israeli ground forces, with Hamas using RPGs, machine guns, and small arms. Hamas employed mortars, short range rockets and antitank guided missiles to support these engagements. Hamas fighters appeared more effective and aggressive than in past conflicts, surprising Israeli forces and coordinating fire. Tunnels were a particular venue for close combat. Israeli forces did not just discover tunnels; they had to fight for them.[49] Hamas used tunnels to surprise Israeli forces with close engagements. While Israel seems to have won most of the close combat actions, Hamas fighters inflicted casualties on even the best Israeli infantry and armored formations.[50] Hamas reportedly has

a "special unit" for close combat and infiltration operations.[51]

Anti-Tank Actions
A second key category of Hamas ground action consisted of attacks on Israeli armored vehicles, including tanks, armored personnel carriers (APCs), and armored engineering vehicles. Hamas had specialized anti-tank units equipped with a variety of anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) and RPGs. ATGMs reportedly included the Malyutka, Konkurs, Fagot, and Kornet types.[52] RPGs included the RPG-7 and the modern and capable RPG-29.[53] Hamas attempted to engage IDF armor with ATGMs at long range, and with anti-tank teams in close combat.[54] Hamas also used IEDs and mines against IDF armor, and attempted to draw the IDF into prepared "ambushes" where all anti-tank means could be brought to bear.[55]

Hamas was less effective with these tactics. Not a single IDF tank was confirmed destroyed, nor were any Namer heavy APCs lost in combat. Other armored vehicles appeared more vulnerable, including the aging M113 APC, in which seven Israeli troops were killed in an RPG blast.[56] Armored corps personnel were killed and wounded by sniping and mortar fire, but by and large Hamas anti-tank weapons and tactics were not of great effect.[57] This was due to the Trophy anti-ATGM system employed on Merkava Mk 4 tanks,[58] the protection provided by Merkava tanks and Namer APCs,[59] and probably Israeli

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37 Horovitz.

38 Elad Benari and Gil Ronen, "Five Soldiers Killed During Attempted Terrorist Infiltration," Israel National News, July, 29, 2014.

39 Ibid.

40 Mitnick et al.

41 See @Qassam_English for numerous tweets on this activity during the war. For example: @Qassam_English, "Fired 4 107 rockets, 5 rockets & 2 mortars at Sderot and 5 107 rockets & 5 mortars at Yad Mordechai kibbutz in response to Israeli Crimes," July 21, 2014.

42 @Qassam_English, "18:25 Al-Qassam Brigades bombed a gathering of armored machines and soldiers Rayyan area east of Rafah with 3 107 missiles," August 3, 2014.

43 @Qassam_English, "16:50 Al-Qassam fired 2 mortars on Hashudat military base, West of Ashkelon, North of Beit Lahia in response to Israeli Crimes," July 19, 2014.

44 This is based on correlation of mortar and rocket fire with tunnel infiltration attempts.

45 Isabel Kershner, "Israel Says Hamas Is Hurt Significantly," *New York Times*, September 2, 2014. Hamas sources estimate Qassam Brigades manpower at 30,000, but this is likely an exaggeration. See "The 'Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades' Weapons And Units," Middle East Media Research Institute, September 2, 2014.

46 Kershner.

47 Israel's targeted killing of three senior Hamas military commanders on August 21, 2014, revealed that one of them, Mohammed Abu Shamlah, was the director of Hamas forces in southern Gaza. See "IDF Targets Senior Hamas Terrorists in Gaza," Israel Defense Forces, August 21, 2014.

48 For the structure of Qassam Brigades combat units in 2009, see Yoram Cohen and Jeffrey White, "Hamas in Combat: The Military Performance of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, October 2009, p. 15.

49 Avi Issacharoff, "Amid the Tunnels and the Traps of Hamas's Militarized Gaza," *Times of Israel*, August 1, 2014.

50 While the Golani infantry brigade seems to have taken the most killed in action, all the other regular infantry and armored brigades, as well as some specialized units, in Gaza took casualties. These included the Parachute Brigade, the Nahal, and Givati infantry brigades, the

7th, 188th, and 401st Armored Brigades, and the Maglan special forces unit and the Yahalom combat engineer brigade.

51 "The 'Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades' Weapons And Units."

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Qassam Brigades reporting provides numerous claims of such actions. See, for example, "Al-Qassam Brigades Fired Rocket-Propelled Grenades at Israeli Tank in the al-Tuffah & Israeli Troop Carrier in Beit Hanoun," @Qassam_English 4:35 AM, July 21, 2014.

55 "Al Qassam Kills 14 Israeli Soldiers in an Ambush East of Gaza city," al-Qassam website, July 20, 2014.

56 Yaakov Lappin, "IDF Wants More Namer APCs and Trophy Protection Systems," *IHS Jane's Defense Weekly*, August 21, 2014.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

tactics that employed heavy firepower against ATGM threats.

Engineering Warfare

Engineering warfare was a principal aspect of the ground fighting. Defensively, Hamas used two primary types of engineering activity to improve its ability to resist incursions by IDF ground forces: defensive tunneling[60] and IEDs.[61] The objective of this activity was to reduce the IDF's ability to maneuver, increase Israeli casualties, and allow Hamas' combat forces to operate tactically against IDF units even in the face of Israel's firepower advantage. Tunnel entrances were routinely booby-trapped to cause IDF casualties.[62] Tunnels were also difficult to destroy, requiring significant engineering efforts to trace and then destroy or disrupt them. [63]

Fire Support

Hamas used mortars extensively, especially 120mm types, and short range rockets to support defensive operations.[64] Israeli forces inside Gaza and on the Israeli side of the border were subject to continual harassment fire.[65]

Sniping

Hamas snipers harassed and inflicted casualties on exposed Israeli troops and armored vehicle personnel.[66]

Suicide Attack

Several suicide attacks were carried out on Israeli forces inside Gaza.[67] The most successful attack was against Givati Infantry Brigade troops on August 1, 2014, which killed three Israeli soldiers and may have been part of a complex abduction operation.[68]

Air Defense

Hamas claims to have an air defense unit equipped with heavy antiaircraft machine guns and several types of man portable air defense systems (MANPADS), including the SA-7, SA-18, and SA-24.[69] During the course of the conflict, Hamas claimed to have "hit" several Israeli aircraft including an F-16 and an F-15.[70]

Overall, Hamas' forces performed relatively well in the ground fighting.[71] Resistance to Israeli ground forces was skillful, adaptive, and conducted coherently. Personnel were willing to engage in close combat with Israeli forces and conducted infiltration and ambush missions with determination. The most successful day for Hamas' defensive operations was July 20, 2014, when 13 soldiers of the Golani Infantry Brigade were killed while attempting to advance into the Shejaiya area east of Gaza city.[72] This action involved a minefield, antitank weapons, infantry and supporting fire from mortars.[73]

Hamas' forces were able to inflict significantly greater casualties than in the 2009 conflict: 66 Israeli soldiers died in 2014, compared to 10 in 2009.[74]

Israeli sources report that as the conflict dragged on, there were cases of Palestinian units breaking under the stress of combat,[75] but this does not appear to have been a general pattern.

Lessons Learned

Hamas is a learning organization and will study this conflict to develop its own set of "lessons learned." One Israeli analyst has described Hamas' "learning" in these terms:

> Hamas has proven strikingly adept at steering its fighting doctrine away from Israel's strengths. If Israel has precise munitions, then Hamas has positioned its weaponry and command centers in hospitals and in extreme proximity to civilian centers. If Israel has highly advanced signals intelligence capacities, then Hamas has turned toward runners and other primitive forms of communication. If Israel controls the skies and sees all from above, then Hamas has carved out a subterranean network from which it launches ambushes and rocket strikes. And if, among other things, Israel's engineers have manufactured a means of striking Hamas' rockets out of the sky, then Hamas has moved toward mortars, which have a limited range but are largely immune to Iron Dome's capabilities.[76]

There are a number of lessons that Hamas likely learned from the conflict. At the highest level, the war at least partially validated Hamas' way of war: sustain strikes into Israel, prevent deep IDF penetration of Gaza, cause Israel to kill civilians, inflict civilian and military casualties on Israel, and achieve an image of victory. The first three of these were largely achieved, the last two much less so. Hamas will likely see no reason for drastic change.

Hamas learned, or re-learned, that it can continue military operations of all types even while under intense attack. Its investment in tunnels and building

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Issacharoff.

63 Ibid.

64 According to the IDF, 356 rockets were fired against its forces in the Gaza Strip. See Jeremy Binnie, "IDF Detail the Damage Inflicted on Gaza Militants," *IHS Jane's Defense Weekly*, August 8, 2014.

65 Ibid. See also numerous Qassam Brigades' tweets on bombardment of Israeli positions and force concentrations with mortars and 107mm rockets during the course of war @Qassam_English.

66 The Qassam Brigades published numerous tweets on sniping actions at @Qassam_English during the conflict.

67 "IDF Troops Foil Female Suicide Bombing Attack," IDF Blog, July 25, 2014.

68 Mitch Ginsburg, "IDF Searches for Officer Kidnapped

in Rafah Attack that Also Killed 2 Soldiers," *Times of Israel*, August 1, 2014.

69 "The 'Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades' Weapons And Units," Middle East Media Research Institute, September 2, 2014.

70 See, for example, @Qassam_English, "#AllPraisesToAllah Today, Al-Qassam Brigades hit an Israeli F-16 warplane over the besieged Gaza Strip...The Israeli jet was targeted early Wednesday with a surface-to-air missile over the city of Deir al-Balah in central Gaza," July 23, 2014; @Qassam_English, "13:56: Managed one of the Qassam units of air defense weapon for targeting F15 warplane; was a direct hit which led to a fire," July 25, 2014.

71 Amos Harel, "As Casualties Mount, the Gaza Operation Threatens to Become a War," *Haaretz*, July 21, 2014.

72 Yaakov Lappin, "13 IDF Soldiers Killed in Gaza as Operation Protective Edge Death Toll Climbs to 18," *Jerusalem Post*, July 20, 2014.

73 "Al Qassam Kills 14 Israeli Soldiers in an Ambush East of Gaza City," Al Qassam website, July 20, 2014.

74 For IDF KIA in Operation Protective Edge, see Ze'ev Ben-Yechiel, "Last IDF Soldier Killed in Protective Edge Laid to Rest," Breaking Israel News, September 2, 2014. For IDF KIA in Operation Cast Lead, see Yoram Cohen and Jeffrey White, "Hamas in Combat: The Military Performance of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, October 2009, p. 22.

75 See, for example, Lilach Shoval, "This is War and We are Winning," *Israel Hayom*, July 27, 2014.

76 Mitch Ginsburg, "Ground Op is Still an Option, but Time is Not on Israel's Side," *Times of Israel*, August 25, 2014.

the rocket and mortar arsenal paid dividends. Israeli air and ground power, while inflicting casualties and damage on Hamas' forces, did not break or render them combat ineffective. Air power was not enough against a physically and mentally hardened enemy, and Hamas' ground forces resisted IDF ground forces at least up to a point.

Fighting from within the population is effective. Israel is heavily constrained by the presence of civilians, and will not use all its available firepower. It will take measures to reduce civilian casualties that will reduce its effectiveness in striking targets and contribute to the survival of Hamas' assets and forces. According to Palestinian and United Nations sources, some 2,100 Gazans were killed in the war.[77] The proportion of civilians to combatants killed is in dispute, with Palestinian and UN sources claiming that about 70% of the casualties were civilian and Israeli sources claiming that a little over 50% were civilians.[78] Whatever the number, significant Palestinian civilian casualties will occur regardless of the measures taken by Israel.[79]

The Iron Dome does not solve Israel's rocket problem. While it is successful in reducing casualties and damage, rocket firing disrupts life across much of Israel. Every time Israelis take to the shelters, Hamas scores a success. When flights to and from Ben Gurion airport are disrupted, it is an important success. When Israelis are forced to abandon settlements close to the border, it is a major success.

This war showed again that Hamas needs air defense capabilities. Without effective air defense, or at least the ability to impose some limits or complications on Israeli air operations, Hamas will continue to lack effective means to defend its military assets and

the people of Gaza. It can be expected that Hamas will attempt to acquire more and better MANPADs.

There are also important lessons at the tactical level. Mortar systems are effective in inflicting casualties and damage on Israeli forces and civilian targets. Close combat can produce Israeli casualties in spite of IDF firepower advantages. Defensive tunnels allow Hamas' forces to engage Israeli units in close combat with, at least on occasion, the element of surprise, giving Hamas' forces a degree of survivability in these engagements. IDF defensive measures reduced the effectiveness of anti-tank weapons. In particular, the Trophy vehicle protection system worked against Hamas' ATGM. Sniping inflicted a number of casualties on IDF personnel, especially vehicle commanders.

Finally, Hamas learned that it has no answer to the Israeli Navy. The IDF's naval forces were able to operate close inshore to conduct naval gunfire and sea commando operations with virtual impunity. Although Hamas reportedly had an interest in coastal defense missiles at one time,[80] none were used in this conflict.

The Contours of the Next Conflict

Until and unless there is either a political or military solution to the Gaza problem, there will be future rounds of conflict. It is possible to see the shape of Hamas' military operations in the next round.

Hamas will likely continue to emphasize rockets as the mainstay of its offensive operations against Israel. Hamas will try to improve its rocket capability. There are several ways it can achieve this, depending on access to technology and critical materials. It can increase the number of rockets in its arsenal to enable it to mount larger strikes and sustain them longer. It can increase the number of mid and long range rockets to bring heavier fire on central and northern Israel to increase the damage and disruption in that region. It can also attempt to improve the accuracy and destructiveness of its rockets. Its leader, Khaled Meshaal, has noted

the inaccuracy of their weapons.[81] Improving the rocket warheads will mean that those that get through the Iron Dome will cause greater casualties and damage. These improvements will challenge the Iron Dome system. Hamas will likely pursue alternatives to rockets for offensive operations, including drones, more powerful mortars, and more offensive tunnels. In a future war, Hamas will attempt to achieve the same level of disruption in central Israel that it achieved in southern Israel.

In preparing for a future war, Hamas will continue to place emphasis on tunnels, including both offensive and defensive tunnels. Hamas will likely strengthen and deepen its defensive layout and means. It will likely increase the number of anti-tank units and weapons it can deploy in response to the Israeli Trophy active protection system and Israel's likely acquisition of additional heavily armored tanks and APCs. Hamas will devote some effort to improving its air defenses, although Israel's air superiority means that Hamas will probably not do more than try to acquire a capability to perhaps shoot down an Israeli aircraft and claim an image of victory.

Whatever its path forward, Hamas will be ready for the next round of war with Israel. It will seek to fight longer, do more damage, and defend itself more vigorously. Whether or not Hamas can accomplish this in the face of Israel's close monitoring of the situation and Egyptian hostility to the group remains to be seen. Yet Hamas cannot give up armed "resistance" without changing its fundamental nature.

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77 William Booth, "The U.N. Says 7 in 10 Palestinians Killed in Gaza Were Civilians. Israel Disagrees," *Washington Post*, August 29, 2014.

78 See Judi Rudoren, "Civilian or Not? New Fight in Tallying the Dead From the Gaza Conflict," *New York Times*, August 5, 2014.

79 These numbers can be manipulated to attract media attention as well. Even if later corrections to casualty counts occur, powerful and lasting impressions of civilian deaths will remain.

80 "Hamas Seeks Chinese C-802 Antiship Missiles from Iran," Free Republic, January 29, 2014.

81 Michael Isikoff, "Hamas Leader: Don't Compare Us to ISIL," Yahoo News, August 22, 2014.

Iraq's New Government and the Question of Sunni Inclusion

By Reidar Visser

POLICY DEBATES RELATED to Iraq, Syria and the problem of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have referenced the need for "Sunni inclusion" in the new Iraqi government. Ever since Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated Ba`ath regime was overthrown in 2003—thereby paving the way for democratic processes that have consistently produced Shi`a-dominated governments—a key transitional question has focused on how Sunnis would fare under the new political order. The significance of the "Sunni question" in Iraq has become accentuated, in particular following the advances of ISIL in Sunni-dominated parts of Iraq since 2013. Less attention has been paid to what the concept of "Sunni inclusion"[1] actually means, and how the question of "Sunni inclusion" has played out in previous Iraqi governments in the post-2003 era.

This article offers a historical overview of Sunni inclusion in past Iraqi governments with the goal of providing more clarity on how Iraqi Sunnis are likely to fare in the most recent government formed by Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in September 2014. It argues that "Sunni inclusion" cannot be properly understood through simply calculating the sectarian composition of the Iraqi government as a measure of representation. Rather, it is necessary to analyze policies on specific issues that are of particular concern to a majority of Iraqi Sunnis, including most prominently de-Ba`athification and the structure of the Iraqi security forces.

Sunnis in the First Maliki Government

Sunni inclusion has had different meanings at different stages in Iraq's post-2003 politics. Following the Sunni boycott of the elections in January 2005, Sunni inclusion in the constitution-writing process was to some extent achieved through the co-option of selected Sunni representatives into the drafting committee. These representatives were primarily affiliated with a Sunni Islamist party known as the Islamic Iraqi Party (IIP). The extent to which this amounted to meaningful inclusion can be debated. During the course of the process, the IIP was reluctantly converted to a pro-constitutional party. It did achieve some last-minute concessions regarding options for future constitutional reform, but by and large its efforts were rejected by the community it claimed to represent: the overwhelming message of those who participated in the constitutional referendum in October 2005 in Sunni areas was a "No" to the new constitution, and a two-thirds majority rejection materialized in the heavily Sunni Arab provinces of Anbar and Salah al-Din.[2] With Kurds and Shi`a minorities participating in large numbers in the mixed (but Sunni Arab-dominated) Mosul, the criteria for a three-province, two-thirds rejection of the constitution as a basis for its non-approval did not emerge, and the draft constitution was adopted against the desire of Sunni public opinion.[3]

In the first Nuri al-Maliki government from 2006-2010, there was initial Sunni inclusion in terms of ministerial representation by IIP (as part of the Tawafuq coalition), as well as by other political parties elected by Sunni and secular voters. Yet few of these ministries were particularly prominent. With one exception, they did not belong to the category of positions Iraqi politicians refer to as particularly sought-after "sovereign ministries," which include: security, oil and finance. Nevertheless, a Sunni general of the Iraqi army without any political connections eventually became defense minister, and Sunni parties also controlled the deputy premier position. Additionally, Tawafuq/IIP controlled one of the three presidency-council positions, which was significant as a (temporary) veto-wielding institution in the first parliamentary cycle from 2005-2010. During the peak of sectarian violence in 2007, however, ministers from IIP/Tawafuq withdrew from al-Maliki's government in protest of its failure to stop sectarian killings.[4]

Tawafuq returned to government again in May 2008.[5] Still, some indication of the fragmented nature of "Sunni inclusion" in the first al-Maliki government was evident from the local election results in 2009, where the parties that were the established "Sunni" forces—in the sense that they were part of the al-Maliki government—by no means managed to secure the majority of the Sunni vote. Instead, local parties affiliated with the tribal Sahwa (Awakening) movement in Anbar and former Ba`athists in Mosul emerged to capture large slices of the Sunni vote.[6] For their part, instead of mending fences with al-Maliki, the IIP seemed more attracted to a role in the burgeoning opposition to the prime minister that emerged among various Iraqi parties even as they continued to be part of his government. Particularly interesting in this regard was the emergence of a Sunni speaker of parliament from the IIP in March 2009, Ayad al-Samarraie. He was clearly backed by al-Maliki's opponents, including the ISCI and the Kurds.[7]

Sunnis in the Second Maliki Government

This situation prompted political reconfiguration ahead of the second parliamentary vote in March 2010. The Sunni governor of Mosul, Athil al-Nujayfi, emerged as a prominent force together with his brother, Usama. Tareq al-Hashemi, formerly an important figure in IIP, broke away to form the more secular Tajdid movement. They were joined in an alliance with other parties that were more secular in orientation and discourse, but that in practice were backed by a majority of nominally Sunni voters: the Iraqi National Accord of Ayyad Allawi and the Hiwar front of Saleh al-Mutlak. Altogether, they formed the massive Iraqiyya alliance, which was a Sunni-secular alliance. Many portrayed

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1 Sunni inclusion refers to the level of participation by Sunni Arabs in the Iraqi government.

2 *Al-Dustur*, October 27, 2005.

3 On the question of Sunni representation in the Iraqi constitutional drafting process, see Jonathan Morrow, "Iraq's Constitutional Process II: An Opportunity Lost," United States Institute of Peace, 2005.

4 "The Iraqi Accord Front's Return to Government," Institute for the Study of War, 2008.

5 Ibid.

6 Radio Sawa, February 15, 2009.

7 Reidar Visser, *A Responsible End? The United States and the Iraqi Transition, 2005–2010* (Charlottesville, VA: Just World Books, 2010), pp. 104-108.

Iraqiyya as a "Sunni" coalition (its opponents were more clearly Shi`a Islamist), but this was not an accurate representation of the alliance.[8] Of course, some of the constituent parts were all-Sunni parties and to some extent spoke a sectarian language. Yet Iraqiyya's leading figure, Ayyad Allawi, is a staunchly secular Shi`a who cannot be reduced to a "stooge" for Sunnis, in whose name he has never spoken.

Due to the combination of Sunni and secular interests in Iraqiyya, it is difficult to dissect the question of Sunni inclusion in the second al-Maliki government, which came into existence with Iraqiyya's reluctant backing in December 2010. As part of the government formation deal, Iraqiyya had demanded control of an extra-constitutional national policy council that was supposed to be created as a check on prime ministerial power (it was never implemented). This particular demand may have been more of a personal goal of Allawi than a meaningful "Sunni demand." On the other hand, there was strong Sunni representation in the new government in terms of heavyweight positions held by individuals with solid Sunni support. Saleh al-Mutlak of the Hiwar bloc was deputy premier and Rafe al-Isawi, a prominent Anbar politician, was minister of finance. Tareq al-Hashemi was vice president, now with only ceremonial powers but still seen as symbolically important. Other Sunni Iraqiyya figures held portfolios of industry, agriculture, education and technology. On paper, at least, there was an adequate level of Sunni representation in terms of key Sunni politicians receiving key ministerial portfolios.

One exception to the general participation of Sunnis in the second al-Maliki government, however, concerned security. It is worth noting that al-Maliki kept these positions away not only from Sunnis, but from everyone with an independent power base (e.g., other Shi`a parties). Instead, he kept control of the security ministries for himself as acting minister, and eventually delegated

defense to a Sunni who he, rather than the Iraqi parliament, had selected: Sadun al-Dulaymi. Al-Dulaymi's role as defense minister under al-Maliki soon came to highlight the concept of the "unrepresentative Sunni": portrayed as marionettes with little or no popular backing, figures like al-Dulaymi were criticized for being tools of al-Maliki that provided him with easy goodwill in certain Western circles who did not go far beyond counting the number of ministers of each sect, quite regardless of the question of their representativeness.

During the years of the second al-Maliki government, it became increasingly clear that al-Maliki attempted to eliminate several Sunni leaders he perceived as threatening. By using the judiciary in what seemed to be politically motivated prosecutions, he first targeted Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi in December 2011 (days after the last U.S. forces had left Iraq) and then Finance Minister Rafe al-Isawi in December 2012, forcing both men out of their positions, and, eventually, out of the country.[9]

At the same time, however, other Sunnis continued to work with al-Maliki in government, including some who held substantial popular mandates based on their personal votes in the March 2010 elections. A problem in evaluating their support for al-Maliki, however, was the tendency of some Sunni ministers to hold on to their positions even in cases where they clearly (and outspokenly) differed with the general direction of cabinet policy. It is not clear whether they supported the government, as they continued to serve as al-Maliki's ministers even though they criticized him publicly. A case in point is Saleh al-Mutlak who attained the curious distinction of declaring his premier a dictator only to continue to work with him.[10]

Sunnis in the Abadi Government

As Iraq went to parliamentary elections in May 2014, the political climate had hardened in a sectarian direction nationally and regionally because of the conflict in Syria and the growing manifestation of military activities by ISIL in Iraqi territory. This turn had

> **"The key to understanding the viability of the new Abadi government is not so much to study its personnel in isolation, but to look for direction of policy."**

prompted protests against the al-Maliki government in many Sunni areas, such as in Falluja and Ramadi, beginning in December 2012. But the protests did not translate into new parties that participated within the established framework of parliamentary politics in Iraq. Instead, the Sunni parties that contested the elections in 2014 were largely the old elites who had dominated Sunni Iraqi politics during the entire post-2003 period. Even many of the ministers of the second al-Maliki government were reaffirmed as MPs despite having done nothing more than hold on to their prestigious offices without achieving any policy influence under al-Maliki's rule. This suggests that the Sunni grievances that were articulated in protest movements in the year before the elections did not produce representative MPs who would participate within the framework of the elected Iraqi parliament.

Soon after the elections in May 2014, a new coalition of mostly Sunni parties that had won seats in parliament coalesced, this time without the secular Allawi, and therefore with a more clear-cut Sunni sectarian profile. Shortly after the new parliament had convened, these parties won a major victory by having Sallim al-Jibburi, a former IIP politician who in 2014 was elected to parliament on a local list of Sunni politicians in Diyala, elected as parliament speaker.[11] In the government

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8   For an example of Western commentators labeling Iraqiyya as "Sunni," see "Biden Makes Surprise Iraq Visit," Associated Press, September 2, 2010.

9   For a good overview of Sunni grievances against al-Maliki during his second term, see Zaid al-Ali, *The Struggle for Iraq's Future: How Corruption, Incompetence and Sectarianism Have Undermined Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014).

10   "Interview with Saleh al-Mutlak," al-Jazira, December 28, 2011.

11 Simeon Kerr, "Iraq's Parliament Elects Speaker as

formation itself in September 2014, the Sunnis had less leverage since al-Abadi probably enjoyed sufficient support to get confirmed without their votes. Still, they opted to take part in his government and achieved a very respectable number of ministries—around seven—although this time service ministries only. The absolute number of Sunni ministers was slightly lower than in the second al-Maliki government, but the overall size of the cabinet was also somewhat smaller. No security ministers from any party were approved in the main parliamentary vote on the new cabinet on September 8, 2014.

In sum, it is hard to initially see a meaningful difference from al-Maliki to al-Abadi as far as inclusion of Sunnis is concerned. For the question of representativeness, though, more important than numbers are political affiliations. The Sunni ministers in al-Abadi's new government are mostly individuals who have been in the political process since 2003. Of course, they have been mostly closer to Sunni sectarian leaders like Nujayfi than to the Shi`a Islamist al-Maliki (the exception being Qutayba al-Jibburi), but they were never irreconcilable with al-Maliki. Conversely, Sunnis who are in open revolt and are considering aligning themselves with ISIL are not represented. Additionally, the tribal and local Sunni politicians with whom al-Maliki sought to improve ties in Anbar and Salah al-Din are poorly represented in the al-Abadi government and it remains to be seen how they will respond to the emergence of a new prime minister.

Conclusion
A key conclusion from the experience of past Iraqi governments in the post-2003 era is that Sunni representation through the inclusion of names with a bit of Sunni constituency is in itself no guarantee for a meaningful inclusion of Sunnis—in the sense of policies that take into consideration demands that are common among Iraqi Sunni voters. There are imbalances with regard to which Sunni MPs become cabinet members, and there are further imbalances with regard to which Sunnis take part in elections and elect their representatives at all.

Army Claims Success in Tikrit," *Financial Times*, July 15, 2014.

Accordingly, the key to understanding the viability of the new al-Abadi government is not so much to study its personnel in isolation, but to look for direction of policy. That is admittedly a challenge, due to the fact that the attempt by Iraqi politicians to stay on time with the government formation this year (after much urging by the higher Shi`a clergy in particular) has meant that it is precisely discussion about ministerial positions, rather than policy as a whole, which has accounted for most of the political negotiations between the participating blocs. Sunni inclusion will require addressing the Iraqi security forces (including army and police deployments in Sunni-majority areas), de-Ba`athification (a revised law that attempts to satisfy common Sunni demands is underway but needs to get passed), the option of federalism (initiatives for transforming some Sunni provinces to regions were unceremoniously and illegally shelved by the al-Maliki government), and developments on the federal supreme court bill (and in particular the authority that will be granted to Shi`a clerics).

There is, however, one appointment issue that remains relevant to Sunnis: the security ministries. These portfolios were left unfilled after the first vote on the al-Abadi government. There is an expectation that a Shi`a official will be appointed to lead the Interior Ministry and a Sunni official to lead the Defense Ministry. The most realistic hope for Iraqi Sunnis will be to have a Sunni professional military officer without any political ties (but capable of keeping al-Abadi at arm's length) appointed as defense minister, and an interior minister without close ties to Shi`a militias. In choosing how to deal with these vacancies, al-Abadi will be sending perhaps his most important signal about whether he intends to be more serious about "Sunni inclusion" than al-Maliki ever was.

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Ebola: Not an Effective Biological Weapon for Terrorists

By Stephen Hummel

IMAGES OF HUMANS infected with Ebola Virus Disease, a strain of viral hemorrhagic fever (VHF), instill public fear and panic. Ebola is a naturally occurring virus with no known natural reservoir.[1] In addition to the innate fear that the deadly virus inspires, a further fear stems from questions about Ebola's potential use as a bioweapon. Ebola is not a new disease. The virus first emerged in 1976 with two simultaneous outbreaks in Sudan and Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo).[2] The disease is named after the Ebola River in Congo on which the Yambuku village, one of the original outbreak villages, is located.[3] After 38 years of scientific study and effective management, Ebola remains a public concern today. There is some apprehension about the potential for its conversion into a bioweapon by a terrorist group.[4]

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) categorizes VHFs as a Category A bioterrorism disease.[5] This designation is based on the ease of their dissemination,[6] their high mortality rates, their potential to cause public panic, and the special preparedness they demand for public health protection. As of September

1 A natural reservoir refers to the long term host of the pathogen. The hosts often do not get the disease or are asymptomatic for the infection. The World Health Organization considers fruit bats in Africa a possible natural reservoir for EVD and is considering the distribution of Ebola virus with the overlap of the fruit bats range. See "Ebola Virus Disease," World Health Organization, April 2014.

2 "Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever in Zaire, 1976," *Bulletin of World Health Organization* 56 (1978), pp. 271-293.

3 When the initial Ebola outbreak ended in 1976, 430 people were dead. Another outbreak occurred in the same region in 1995. See Ken Alibek, *Biohazard* (New York: Dell Publishing, 2000), p. 126.

4 Elizabeth Palermo, "Could Ebola be Turned into a Bio-Weapon? Possible, but Not so Easy," CBS News, August 11, 2014.

5 "Bioterrorism Agents and Diseases," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, undated.

6 Ease of dissemination refers to the person-to-person transmission of the disease. In the case of Ebola, transmission occurs through the passing of bodily fluids.

19, 2014, the CDC has confirmed 3,341 cases of Ebola in the most recent outbreak and 2,811 deaths across five West African states.[7] The World Health Organization estimates the mortality rate at about 70%.[8] Transmission of the virus to humans occurs through direct contact of bodily fluids such as blood, secretions, and other contaminated fluids. The transmission of the fluid occurs through broken skin, mucous membranes, or eating infected tissues such as bush meat. Upon infection of its victims, the acute viral illness is characterized by "sudden onset of fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache, sore throat; followed by vomiting, diarrhea, rash, impaired liver and kidney function and in some cases both internal and external bleeding."[9]

The prevalence and pathogenicity of Ebola as well as the proximity of the outbreak to terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram in Nigeria pose the question: could Ebola be used as a bioweapon? Dr. Vladimir Nikiforov, head of the Department of Infectious Diseases at Russia's Federal Medical-Biological Agency, has claimed publicly that Ebola could be turned into a biological weapon.[10] Ken Alibek, the former deputy head of the Soviet Union's biological weapons program, explained in his book *Biohazard* that the Soviet Union weaponized Ebola during the Cold War.[11]

Despite previous work conducted by the Soviet Union and current assertions by some in the media, Ebola is not an ideal bioweapon.[12] This article examines the extreme difficulty a terrorist organization would face in weaponizing Ebola as well as challenges several non-conventional employment options of Ebola. This article finds that, despite the outbreak's location in West Africa, terrorist groups such as Boko Haram lack the knowledge and specialized equipment necessary to employ Ebola as a bioweapon.

Ebola as a Bioweapon?
Biological weapons, unlike conventional munitions, have extensive reach capabilities. "Biological agents can produce lethal or incapacitating effects over an extensive area and can reproduce," according to the Department of Defense.[13] Bioweapons are not limited by the blast radius of a shell; rather, they can replicate in an infected host and spread from one person to another. For Ebola to be used as a bioweapon in its naturally occurring state requires several highly technical steps. Ideal bioweapons, for example, are aerosolizable in order to infect mass numbers of people quickly.

In an interview with CBS News, Hamish de Bretton-Gordon, the chief operating officer of SecureBio, stated that for a terrorist group to use Ebola as a bioweapon, the group must first "obtain a live host infected with the virus,"[14] then transport the host to a laboratory to extract the virus. Extracting the virus is not a simple process. The flu virus, for example, is approximately 100 nanometers in size, so the laboratory must have the necessary extraction equipment and personnel trained to complete the skilled techniques, all within the required biosafety level so that the technicians would not become infected themselves. Furthermore, the skills required to extract Ebola from blood are only gained through practice. The training and time required to extract a virus from blood correctly is significant, making the trained

personnel capable of extracting Ebola a highly coveted commodity for a terrorist organization seeking to use the virus. Such personnel must operate in the necessary protective equipment to shield them from inadvertent transmission. Failure to work in what is deemed a biosafety level 4 lab, of which there are only about two dozen worldwide, would likely not result in successful extraction but almost assuredly death of the handlers.[15]

A study conducted by the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) demonstrated that Ebola could be transmitted in an aerosolized form, but their research is not based on realistic scenarios.[16] The rhesus monkeys used in their 1995 study were forced to inhale large quantities of droplets via a breathing apparatus[17] containing the Ebola virus.[18] Instead of the typical fluid-to-fluid transmission of Ebola, the monkeys contracted the virus via highly concentrated exposure to their respiratory mucous membranes. Moreover, these experiments were done in an extremely controlled biosafety level 4 environment, and the monkeys themselves were anesthetized during the infection process. The labs at USAMRIID have tremendous resources and technical expertise to conduct aerogenic infection experiments of Ebola, which terrorists groups like Boko Haram currently lack.

Ebola is also not a robust virus; it does not survive well outside of the host. Samples, consequently, cannot be extracted from an infected host and frozen for later use. As de Bretton-Gordon explained, "the reason anthrax has been the biological weapon

7 "2014 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, September 26, 2014. The five West African states that are reporting Ebola cases and deaths to the World Health Organization and the CDC are Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.

8 Christopher Dye et al., "The International Ebola Emergency," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 371 (2014). This number is estimated due to underreporting in the number of Ebola cases. The death rate among laboratory confirmed cases is close to 84%, but the total number of cases (not laboratory confirmed) is reported to be 5,864, putting the death rate at close to 50%. The discrepancy in the mortality rate is due to reporting from rural villages and laboratory confirmation.

9 "Ebola Virus Disease," World Health Organization, April 2014.

10 TJ Larson, "Top Medical Expert Calls Ebola Outbreak 'Suspicious'; Others Cite Use as Bio-Weapon," All Voices, August 9, 2014.

11 Alibek.

12 Palermo.

13 "Chapter 1: Introduction, Potential Military Chemical/Biological Agents and Compounds," U.S. Department of Defense, p. I-1.

14 Palermo.

15 The Biosafety Level 4 (BSL-4) is required for work with dangerous and exotic agents that pose a high risk of life threatening disease. The BSL-4 labs are specially designed and engineered to prevent microorganisms from being disseminated into the environment. All work in the lab is conducted in a positive pressure personnel suit to protect staff. See "Biosafety Level 4 Labs and BSL Information," Federation of American Scientists, available at www.fas.org/programs/bio/biosafetylevels.html.

16 E. Johnson, N. Jaax, J. White, and P. Jahrling, "Lethal Experimental Infections of Rhesus Monkeys by Aerosolized Ebola," *International Journal of Experimental Pathology* 76 (1995): pp. 227-236.

17 The virus containing droplets were 0.8 to 1.2 μm in size.

18 Johnson et al.

of choice is not for its mortality rate—when properly weaponized it is similar to Ebola—but for the fact that it is exceptionally hardy. Anthrax can and will survive for centuries in the ground, enduring frosts, extreme temperatures, wind, drought, and rain before reemerging."[19]

In the 1970s, the World Health Organization studied the effects of aerosolized Rift Valley Fever, another VHF strain. The WHO projected that the effects of 50 kilograms of aerosolized RVF on a municipality of 500,000 would have an estimated downwind distance of one kilometer and cause 35,000 casualties with a mortality rate of 0.5%.[20] Ebola has a higher morbidity and mortality rate than Rift Valley Fever. Fifty kilograms of Ebola is an astronomical amount for a terrorist group to culture and purify.[21] In his book *Biohazard*, Ken Alibek, the former deputy head of the Soviet Union's biological weapons program, detailed how the Soviet Union spent billions of dollars and decades working to weaponize Ebola, to little avail.[22] Technology, expertise, and vast amounts of money are the three necessary components to weaponizing Ebola that a terrorist organization simply does not possess.

A Limited Bioweapon?
The Ebola virus is clearly not an ideal conventional bioweapon. The virus is extremely debilitating and requires specialized equipment and expertise for handling. Additionally, large quantities of the virus must be cultured to create the virus-containing droplets to aerogenically spread the virus. Otherwise, transmission is limited to direct contact.

Ebola as an unconventional bioweapon, however, is a concern. Nevertheless, the risks and concerns are considerably different. The recent stabbing of a federal air marshal at Lagos airport in Nigeria

with a syringe highlights a potential means for terrorist organizations to spread the virus.[23] With this method, however, the victim would know that they had been potentially exposed to a pathogen. Attack with a syringe or any other obvious delivery system would prompt the victim to seek immediate medical attention. The victim would be tested for a wide array of chemicals and agents as well as likely undergo precautionary quarantine—which is what occurred to the federal air marshal in Nigeria—to ensure they were not exposed to Ebola. The syringe in this case was also sent to the biodefense laboratory at Fort Detrick, Maryland, for further inspection.[24]

Another plausible means for a terrorist group to spread Ebola would be to infect themselves and then attempt to spread the virus to others by spending time in confined public spaces, such as in an airplane or bus.

In such a scenario, the time period between when the terrorist has a high enough titter count of virus in his blood to infect others and when the terrorist himself is debilitated by the disease is extremely short. The virus that the terrorist would hope to spread to others would be concurrently killing its host. Consequently, it would be a race between contagion of others and the death of the terrorist. As the virus replicates, the body becomes more and more incapacitated. The white blood cell count drops and bodily functions diminish. The terrorist would appear sick, alerting those in his vicinity to avoid him. The virus is not airborne, so the terrorist's ability to move around as a kind of human viral bomb is negligible since he must come into direct physical contact with others to spread fluids either through broken skin or mucous membrane.

Assuming a terrorist group succeeds in finding an ideal transmission window in which they could spread the virus unnoticed to others, the infection would be no different than a typical pandemic. The rate of infection and presentation of

symptoms is not the same as a typical weapon of mass destruction. It would not pose a mass casualty threat. The biomedical surveillance capabilities of hospitals and health organizations in conjunction with the response of municipalities and governments around the world would enable a counter-response. Some individuals would invariably get sick, but they would be quarantined and receive medical care. City limits and borders could be closed to prevent the spread of the disease.

The risk of Ebola as an effective unconventional biological weapon is low. The aspects of the virus that support its classification as a potential bioweapon by the CDC are also the same factors that limit its capabilities as a functional bioweapon. Terrorist groups lack the technology, the safety equipment, and the expertise to make the virus into hearty, contagious bioweapons like Anthrax or Small Pox.

Conclusion
Ebola is a deadly disease. Like any biological agent, if given sufficient amount of time, money, and expertise under specific conditions, it could be turned into a biological weapon. The resources of groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are not the same as the former Soviet Union, which spent billions of dollars and decades in secret laboratories working to weaponize Ebola. Despite reporting that ISIL has an estimated $2 billion in amassed wealth,[25] setting up a mobile laboratory capable of extracting Ebola from infected patients and transforming the cultured virus into a bioweapon is not likely a priority given the intensified fighting in Iraq and the proposed airstrikes in Syria. In the hands of terrorists, Ebola is perhaps more deadly for its own members who have minimal training with and knowledge of the virus.

As a non-conventional bioweapon, Ebola is also far from ideal. Ebola is not an aerosolized virus. Consequently, a terrorist organization would have to use very direct delivery methods for infection. Being accosted with a needle is noticeable to a victim, prompting them to seek medical attention and

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19 Palermo.

20 "Health Aspects of Chemical and Biological Weapons," World Health Organization Group of Consultants, 1970, pp. 98-109.

21 To culture 50 kilograms of Ebola would consequently require tremendous resources to create an environment to keep cells alive in order for the cells to host a virus that is simultaneously killing the host cell it is using to replicate in.

22 Alibek.

23 "Air Marshal Attacked With Syringe in Nigeria, Flies to Texas," NBC News, September 8, 2014.

24 Andrew Pollack, "Stabbing with Syringe in Nigeria Raises Concerns of Ebola as Weapon," *New York Times*, September 10, 2014.

25 Howard Shatz, "To Defeat the Islamic State, Follow the Money," *Politico*, September 10, 2014.

commencing containment procedures, if necessary.

If a terrorist organization sought to infect its own members, becoming in effect Ebola-infected suicide bombers, the short timeframe between when the virus count in the host would be high enough to infect others and when the host himself is debilitated by symptoms would prove highly limiting. The reach of such novel suicide bombers could be drastically reduced through biomedical surveillance networks in cities and hospitals around the world, aided by health screens at airports.

Ebola evokes images of a painful death, but to date its effect on humans has been relatively limited. Last year, malaria killed more than 627,000 people[26] worldwide, and influenza kills between 3,000 and 49,000 people annually in the United States.[27] Yet these two diseases are not considered potential bioweapons because, despite their high rates of infection, their mortality rates are low and do not cause general panic.

Fear of Ebola should not stem from its potential use as a biological weapon. Ebola is currently limited to a few West African states, and the real probability of Ebola spreading naturally to neighboring countries should itself be a cause for great public health concern. Claims that Ebola could be easily transformed into a biological weapon by a terrorist organization are unfounded and sensationalized.

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The views presented are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of Defense, the U.S. Army, or any of its subordinate commands.

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26 "Fact Sheet on the World Malaria Report 2013," World Health Organization, December 2013.

27 "Estimating Seasonal Influenza-Associated Deaths in the United States: CDC Confirms Variability of Flu," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, September 12, 2013.

The Life and Death of Al-Shabab Leader Ahmed Godane

By Christopher Anzalone

ON THE NIGHT of Monday, September 1, 2014, a U.S. airstrike targeted two vehicles near a wooded area of Sablale district in the Lower Shabelle region of Somalia, an area used by the Somali militant group al-Shabab to train its military forces.[1] The strike killed Ahmed Godane, the elusive *amir* of al-Shabab, upon whom the United States had placed a $7 million bounty in June 2012.[2] The U.S. government officially confirmed Godane's death on September 5, 2014.[3]

Godane's death, significant in itself, comes at a particularly sensitive time for al-Shabab. The group is facing a renewed offensive, Operation Indian Ocean, by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali federal government that aims to capture Baraawe, the last major port town that the insurgents still control.[4] The internal dynamics within al-Shabab itself remain the subject of intense debate and speculation, although there is little hard, verifiable information about the current state within the group's multiple leadership tiers, from the top level to the regional and district-level administrators and field commanders. The death of Godane, who only succeeded in consolidating his control of the group by killing or driving out his major critics and

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1 Feisal Omar and Abdi Sheikh, "Somalia's al Shabaab Name New Leader after U.S. Strike, Warn of Revenge," Reuters, September 6, 2014; "Al-Shabab Leader Ahmed Abdi Godane was Target of U.S. Airstrike," Associated Press, September 1, 2014; Helene Cooper, Eric Schmitt, and Jeffrey Gettleman, "Strikes Killed Militant Chief in Somalia, U.S. Reports," *New York Times*, September 5, 2014.

2 Andrew Quinn, "U.S. Offers Millions in Bounty for Top Somali Militants," Reuters, June 6, 2012; "Somalia's al-Shabab: Ahmed Abdi Godane Targeted by US," BBC, September 2, 2014.

3 "Statement by the Press Secretary on the Death of Ahmed Godane," White House, September 5, 2014; David Smith, "Al-Shabaab Leader Ahmed Abdi Godane Killed by US Air Strike in Somalia," *Guardian*, September 5, 2014.

4 "Somali and AU Forces in al-Shabab Offensive," al-Jazira, August 30, 2014.

potential rivals last summer, has led to renewed predictions that al-Shabab will split into different factions bickering over power and control of the group's remaining manpower, territories, and resources.[5] Al-Shabab announced Godane's immediate successor, Ahmad Umar, within a week of his death and a day after the Pentagon confirmed that al-Shabab's leader had been killed. Known as Abu Ubayda, Umar reportedly played an instrumental leadership role in the purge of dissidents from the group in 2013.[6]

This article examines Godane's tenure as al-Shabab's *amir*, paying particular attention to both the group's period of expansion, followed by stalemate and beginnings of its decline, the strategic outmaneuvering of his critics and rivals, and the internal purge he and his loyalists enacted in 2013. It finds that Godane was a charismatic and multifaceted leader who demonstrated both organizational capabilities and media savvy, enabling him to oversee al-Shabab's territorial and governing expansion between 2008 and 2010. His desire for sole power within al-Shabab, however, ultimately shattered the group's internal cohesion and led a number of founding leaders and prominent members to break ranks and leave. The future of the group after his death will depend on the internal cohesiveness of the post-June 2013 version of al-Shabab.

Early Life and the Islamic Courts Union
Many of the details of Godane's early life remain shrouded in unverifiable rumor and hagiography, particularly in al-Shabab circles. He was born in July 1977 in Hargeisa, now the capital of the self-declared independent republic of Somaliland in northern Somalia, into the large Arab/Isaaq clan.[7] His

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5 Edmund Blair and Drazen Jorgic, "Attack on Somali Islamist Leader Seen Triggering Power Struggle," Reuters, September 4, 2014.

6 Abdi Sheikh, "Somali Islamist Rebels Pledge Allegiance to New Leader," Reuters, September 8, 2014; Feisal Omar and Abdi Sheikh, "Somalia's al Shabaab Name New Leader after U.S. Strike, Warn of Revenge," Reuters, September 6, 2014.

7 "Security Council Committee on Somalia and Eritrea Issues Lists of Individuals Identified Pursuant to Paragraph 8 of Resolution 1844 (2008)," United Nations, April 12, 2010; Markus Virgil Hoehne, "Counter-terrorism in Somalia: How External Interference Helped

initial education was at the Umar bin al-Khattab Islamic school in Hargeisa where he reportedly excelled.[8] Well versed in poetry, which he regularly inserted into his audio statements and other messaging while al-Shabab's *amir*, Godane was drawn in particular to the poetry of Muhammad Abdullah Hassan, a Somali Sufi leader who led a rebellion against the British and Italians, who dubbed him the "Mad Mullah," in the early 20th century.[9]

Godane received scholarships to study in Sudan and Pakistan, the latter reportedly funded by private Saudi donors, and it was during his travels abroad that he is believed to have been attracted to militant Islamism.[10] From Pakistan, Godane is believed to have traveled in 1998 to Afghanistan, where he received military training and battlefield experience alongside the Afghan Taliban before returning to Somalia in 2001.[11]

In the 1990s, Godane worked for the money transfer company al-Barakaat, which was shut down by the U.S. government after the 9/11 attacks, in an office in the town of Burao in the Togdheer region of Somaliland.[12] He is suspected of participating in the murders of several foreign nationals in Somaliland between 2003 and 2004 alongside Adan Hashi Farah Ayro, an influential founding ideologue of the group and Godane's one-time deputy.[13]

In mid-2006, Godane was named the secretary-general of the Islamic Courts Union's (ICU) executive council.[14] A close associate of Ayro, he had previously been connected to al-Ittihad al-Islami, the first major organized Somali Islamist movement that emerged after the fall of Siad Barre in January 1991.[15] After the Ethiopian invasion toppled the ICU from power in 2006, Godane was one of the al-Shabab leaders instrumental in reorganizing the group and laying the groundwork for the launch of its insurgency against the subsequent Ethiopian occupation.[16] He was also at the forefront of delegitimizing Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ahmad after the latter was elected as the new president of the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG).[17]

The exact date of Godane's rise to al-Shabab's *amir* is debated, although it seems he ascended to this position in December 2007.[18]

At the Helm During al-Shabab's "Golden Age" (2008-2010)

Godane, during his time as *amir*, oversaw the rapid expansion of both al-Shabab's territorial control in southern and central Somalia as well as the construction of insurgent governing structures to exercise a degree of control over these newly-acquired areas. Regional governors were appointed to oversee the implementation of the group's policies, programs, and edicts at

the provincial (*wilayat*) level, with local administrators exercising authority at lower levels.[19] Each *wilayat* has, at least in theory, a local Shabab-controlled Shari`a court, offices of financial and social affairs, including departments for the collection and distribution of religiously-mandated charity (*zakat*), and units from al-Shabab's two armed forces, the frontline fighting Jaysh al-'Usra fighting force and the "police force," known as Jaysh al-Hisba.[20]

By 2009, al-Shabab succeeded in bringing about a period of relative stability in much of the territory it controlled through the implementation of a strict interpretation of Shari`a that essentially reduced Islamic jurisprudence to the carrying out of punishments for a set list of offenses including murder, theft, robbery, adultery and fornication, and spying. The harsh implementation of this strict legal code was important from an economic perspective as well because it led to a relative revival of commerce and trade in areas under the group's control, including major population and economic centers, such as the cities of Baidoa and Kismayo, as well as major towns and transit points.[21] Local insurgent administrations also undertook small to medium scale public works projects, including the construction or repair of bridges and roads, the building of irrigation canals, and the distribution of relief aid during the famine in East Africa in 2011.[22] Al-Shabab also developed

to Produce Militant Islamism," Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, December 17, 2009, p. 15.

8 Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), p. 37.

9 Godane spoke about his admiration for Hassan in an interview with al-Shabab's Radio al-Andalus. See Ahmed Godane, "The First Interview of Radio al-Andalus with the Amir of Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahideen, the Shaykh Mukhtar Abu al-Zubayr," 2011.

10 Tristan McConnell, "Who is Al Shabaab Leader Ahmed Godane?" GlobalPost, October 1, 2013.

11 Ibid.; Hoehne, p. 15; "US Confirms al-Shabab Leader Ahmed Godane Killed," BBC, September 5, 2014; Smith, "Al-Shabaab Leader Ahmed Abdi Godane Killed by US Air Strike in Somalia"; Chothia; Smith, "Ahmed Abdi Godane: What We Know About U.S. Airstrike Terror Target."

12 Hoehne, p. 15; Paul Beckett, "Shutdown of Al Barakaat Severs Lifeline for Many Somalia Residents," *Wall Street Journal*, December 4, 2001.

13 Hoehne, p. 15; Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, p. 37;

Millat Ibrahim 1, September 2008, p. 17.

14 Ibid.; Abdulkadir Khalif, "Slain Al-Shabaab Chief a 'Master Manipulator and Orator,'" *Africa Review*, September 7, 2014.

15 Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, p. 37.

16 Ibid., p. 53.

17 "Somalia's Divided Islamists," International Crisis Group, May 2010.

18 The United Nations and Hansen date his rise to *amir* as occurring before Ayro's killing. See Hoehne, p. 21; Smith, "Ahmed Abdi Godane: What We Know About U.S. Airstrike Terror Target"; Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, p. 59; David Smith, Abdalle Ahmed, and Tom McCarthy, "Al-Shabaab Leader Ahmed Abdi Godane Killed by US Air Strike in Somalia," *Guardian*, September 5, 2014; "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1853 (2008)," United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia, p. 14; "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1811 (2008)," United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia, p. 19.

19 "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia," United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia, March 10, 2010, pp. 14-16; Stig Jarle Hansen, "Shabab Central: Africa's 'Taliban' Grows More Unified," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 16, 2010.

20 "Jaysh al-'Usra" (Army of Difficulty/Hardship) is the name that the Prophet Muhammad reportedly gave to the army he gathered, after great difficulty, for a military expedition in 630 CE against Tabuk. The term "hisba" refers to the practice of verifying moral and ethical behavior, originally in the marketplace.

21 "The Announcement of the Implementation of the Law of Islam in the city of Marka in Front of a Large Rally of Muslims," al-Shabab, November 13, 2008; "The General Command [of Al-Shabab] Mobilizes Jaysh al-Hisba for the Implementation of the Call to God in the Freed Cities and Villages," al-Shabab, August 5, 2008.

22 Hamza Mohamed, "Somali Farmers Benefit from al-Shabab Reforms: In Somalia's Breadbasket, Many Welcome al-Shabab's Move to Expel Foreign Aid Groups

a sophisticated and capable media operations network that produced materials in a variety of languages.[23]

Under Godane, al-Shabab's leadership pursued a pragmatic approach toward clan politics and drew its leadership and rank-and-file from a relatively diverse array of clans and sub-clans, unlike many of Somalia's other armed factions, which were thoroughly clan-based.[24] There were allegations, however, that Godane privileged fellow Isaaq clan members with advancement in al-Shabab over members of other clan groups.[25]

Decline, Internal Discord, and the Purge

Differences between Godane and other al-Shabab senior leaders, chief among them Mukhtar "Abu Mansur" Robow, have existed since at least 2008, when the two disagreed over strategy.[26] These earlier disputes, however, were settled peacefully and did not result in a split within insurgent ranks.[27] Some, however, saw Robow's ouster as the group's official spokesperson as part of a campaign by Godane and his loyalists to marginalize the popular Rahanweyn commander.[28]

Godane faced mounting internal criticism from other insurgent leaders for the failure of the "Ramadan

Offensive" in Mogadishu in August 2010. Planned and pushed for by the *amir*, the offensive was essentially composed primarily of ill-considered mass infantry attacks on AMISOM and TFG positions in the capital city, which led to high insurgent casualties likely numbering in the hundreds.[29] Subsequent "Ramadan offensives" in 2011-2013 also failed to yield many substantial positive results in the longer term for al-Shabab.[30] Internal discord continued and ultimately centered on control of the group's consultative council, which Godane focused on stacking with loyalists while removing or otherwise marginalizing independent voices and critics, including Robow and Ibrahim al-Afghani (also known as Ibrahim Hajji Jama Mee'aad), who were both founding members of al-Shabab.[31] Ultimately, Godane suspended the meetings of the council.[32] Internal discord increased following the entry of Kenyan and Ethiopian military forces in southern and western Somalia in October and November 2011 respectively, and it was exacerbated further by Godane's decision to formally join al-Shabab with al-Qa`ida.[33] Mounting criticism from Somali Salafist religious scholars and jurists who had previously supported the group also damaged al-Shabab.[34]

In mid-March 2012, what went on to become the most public internal crisis began when the American Omar Hammami, arguably al-Shabab's most

internationally recognizable foreign fighter, posted a video to his YouTube account revealing that he had left the group due to differences concerning "Shari`a and strategy" and feared for his life.[35] He and other disgruntled foreign fighters, including another former field commander in al-Shabab, Khattab al-Masri, continued to spar with al-Shabab and its supporters both on the ground and online.[36] The transnational jihadist e-universe grew polarized between supporters of Hammami and dissident al-Shabab leaders on the one hand and Godane and his loyalists on the other, creating a public relations nightmare for the group. Hammami in particular goaded Godane, other al-Shabab members, and their supporters online via his Twitter account. The Godane faction, which was busy consolidating its hold of the group, tried first to ignore Hammami's criticisms while it sought to track him and other dissidents down to quietly kill them. They were

and Build Canals," al-Jazira, March 11, 2014; Christopher Anzalone, "Al-Shabab's Setbacks in Somalia," *CTC Sentinel* 4:10 (2011); Christopher Anzalone, "Insurgency, Governance, & Legitimacy in Somalia: A Reassessment of Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahideen, its Rhetoric & Divisions," al-Wasat blog, December 6, 2010.

23 Ken Menkhaus, "Al-Shabaab and Social Media: A Double-Edged Sword," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 20:2 (2014); Christopher Anzalone, "The Rapid Evolution of Al-Shabab's Media and Insurgent 'Journalism,'" OpenDemocracy, November 16, 2011.

24 Christopher Anzalone, "Harakat al-Shabab Continues to Court Somalia's Clans as Hasan Dahir Aweys Assumes a More Public Role," al-Wasat blog, March 21, 2011; "Harakat al-Shabab Claims Support from 'Ayr Clan Leaders," al-Wasat blog, November 4, 2011; "Harakat al-Shabab & Somalia's Clans," al-Wasat blog, March 8, 2011.

25 Michael A. Weinstein, "Somalia: Al-Shabaab's Split and its Absorption of Hizbul Islam," Garowe Online, January 8, 2011; "Internal Disputes Plague Al-Shabaab Leadership after Mogadishu Withdrawal," *Terrorism Monitor* 9:33 (2011).

26 Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, p. 78.

27 Ibid.

28 "Somalia's Divided Islamists," pp. 6-7.

29 Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, pp. 102-106; "Attack Kills U.N. Peacekeepers in Somalia," United Press International, August 31, 2010; "Somali Fighters Attack Capital: Al-Shabab Sends 11 Truckloads of Armed Fighters to Mogadishu after Declaring Final War," al-Jazira, August 27, 2010; "115 Killed, 200 Wounded in 4-Day Mogadishu Clashes," Garowe Online, August 26, 2010.

30 "Islamic Militants Launch Ramadan Offensive in Famine-stricken Somalia," CNN, August 1, 2011; "Somalia's al-Shabab Rebels Leave Mogadishu," BBC, August 6, 2011; "Al-Shabaab Changes Tactics, Withdraws from Somali Capital," CNN, August 6, 2011.

31 Matt Bryden, "The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity?" Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 2014.

32 Ibid.

33 Abdi Sheikh, "Residents Fear Clashes as Somali Rebel Row Worsens," Reuters, April 1, 2012.

34 Hassan M. Abukar, "Somalia's Salafi Groups and Fatwa Wars," Somali Observer, November 21, 2012; Tres Thomas, "War Igniting between al-Shabaab and al-I'tisam," Somalianewsroom.com, March 12, 2013.

35 Omar Hammami video message, "urgentmessage," available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAr2srI-Nqks&context=C4c3babcADvjVQa1PpcFOfNTzHx2G fZzvpWfoWlVAt97jxVvFusbw=. For background on Hammami, see Christopher Anzalone, "The Evolution of an American Jihadi: The Case of Omar Hammami," *CTC Sentinel* 5:6 (2012). Hammami had met Godane during his training to join the militias of the ICU. Godane even "welcomed" him and other foreign fighters in the port town of Baraawe after the latter joined al-Shabab. See Abu Mansuur al-Amriiki [Omar Hammami], "The Story of an American Jihaadi: Part One," May 2012, pp. 61, 99. For more in-depth discussion of the schisms, see Christopher Anzalone, "The Rise and Decline of al-Shabab in Somalia," *Turkish Review* 4:4 (2014).

36 Many jihadist internet forums quickly deleted posts critical of Godane and his loyalists within al-Shabab. A prominent exception was the Global Jihad forum, which became one of the main websites to not only allow the posting of materials critical of Godane and al-Shabab from Hammami and dissident former al-Shabab leaders and members, but also prominently advertised them. More recently, the forum's administrators have taken a position against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, siding with Jabhat al-Nusra, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, and other jihadist critics of the former. See J.M. Berger, "Omar and Me: My Strange, Frustrating Relationship with an American Terrorist," *Foreign Policy*, September 16, 2013; Karl Morand, "Jihadis on Twitter," podcast discussion with J.M. Berger, Middle East Week Podcast, April 11, 2014. Khattab al-Masri's criticisms of Godane were published in a Somali translation in early July 2014 by the Global Jihad forum as "Tarjamad Soomali ah Kalimad walaalaheyga Ansartow walaalka qaa'idka khadaab al-misri—Allah dhowro."

eventually forced, however, to publicly respond to Hammami's allegations that Godane and his supporters had purged a number of foreign fighters from al-Shabab's ranks, including Fazul Abdullah Muhammad, a longtime East Africa al-Qa`ida operative, and Bilal al-Berjawi, a British-Lebanese foreign fighter.[37]

The feud culminated in September 2013 when the Godane-controlled Amniyat, al-Shabab's intelligence branch, finally managed to track down and kill Hammami and another dissident foreign fighter, Usama al-Britani.[38] Shortly before his death, Hammami accused Godane of targeting Muslims and other mujahidin, stating that Godane had thus become an apostate. He also compared Godane and his faction to the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which turned its guns on its own in the 1990s during a brutal war with Algeria's military government and has since been used by Sunni jihadists as a cautionary tale of *takfir* (excommunication) and extreme ideological puritanism.[39]

Godane, as he was facing mounting criticism from Hammami and dissident foreign fighters, was threatened by a serious internal challenge from a number of prominent al-Shabab dissident leaders, including founding members Robow and al-Afghani. They criticized his leadership and treatment of foreign fighters as well as his use of violence in suppressing dissent both internally and among the communities

under al-Shabab's rule.[40] In late June 2013, al-Afghani was arrested by the Amniyat network along with another senior dissident and founding member of the group, the charismatic preacher Mu`allim Burhan (Abd al-Hamid Hashi Olhayi). Both were then killed under disputed circumstances.[41]

Godane had finally succeeded in eliminating his most vocal and potentially dangerous critics, and he and his loyalists now exercised complete control over al-Shabab. Godane stood at the pinnacle of his power, thanks to his gradual but continuing consolidation of control within the group, strategic outmaneuvering of rivals, and key support from within key segments of al-Shabab, chief among them the Amniyat network. He reaped a strategic media victory a few months later when al-Shabab gunmen seized control of the upscale Westgate Mall in Nairobi and confounded Kenyan security forces for days.[42] Al-Shabab also continued to carry out major attacks inside Mogadishu, suggesting that the Godane-led al-Shabab would continue to be a major player in the country despite its loss of territory and other setbacks suffered since the spring of 2011.

Conclusion

Despite his seeming brilliance in outplaying his opponents, in the end Godane's tenure as undisputed *amir* of al-Shabab, free of internal threats from senior founding figures such as al-Afghani, Burhan, and Robow, and publicly known former insurgent media

personalities like Hammami, was short. He outlived the latter by barely a year before being killed in a U.S. airstrike. During his tenure, al-Shabab reached the height of its territorial, administrative, economic, and military power. It was also under his leadership, however, that al-Shabab fell into decline, losing great swaths of territory and most major urban centers and economic hubs, and earning the displeasure of Usama bin Ladin, whom Godane had long tried to convince to accept al-Shabab as an official al-Qa`ida affiliate.[43]

At the time of his death, Godane and other al-Shabab leaders faced two difficult decisions: first, how to handle the renewed military push by AMISOM and Somali federal government forces; second, how to resolve the serious ideological and strategic conundrum of what to do regarding Syria and the competition between Ayman al-Zawahiri's al-Qa`ida and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).[44] The rapid territorial expansion of the latter has outshined the seemingly moribund and isolated al-Qa`ida central leadership in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi, Abu Hamza

37 Jason Straziuso, "Twitter-loving U.S. Jihadist Faces Death Threat from Somali Militants after Fallout," Associated Press, January 18, 2013; Nelly Lahoud, "The Merger of Al-Shabab and Qa`idat al-Jihad," *CTC Sentinel* 5:2 (2012); Raffaello Pantucci and A.R. Sayyid, "Foreign Fighters in Somalia and al-Shabaab's Internal Purge," *Terrorism Monitor* 11:22 (2013); Clint Watts, "Hammami's Latest Call Reveals Deceit, Dissension and Death in Shabaab & al Qaeda," Selected Wisdom blog, January 8, 2013. Al-Shabab released a lengthy written statement, "A Candid Clarification Concerning Abu Mansur al-Amriki," in English and Arabic on December 17, 2012, in which Hammami and other dissidents were painted as collaborators with al-Shabab's enemies.

38 "Al-Amriki and al-Britani: Militants 'Killed' in Somalia," BBC, September 12, 2013; "US-born 'Jihadist Rapper' Omar Hammami Reportedly Killed in Somalia," Associated Press, September 12, 2013.

39 Harun Maruf, "Interview with Omar Hammami," Voice of America, September 12, 2013.

40 Mukhtar Robow, Hasan Dahir Aweys, Abu Bakr al-Zayla'i, Zubayr Muhajir, and Mu'allim Burhan Sheikh Hashi, "Fatwa Concerning the Attempted Assassination of Abu Mansur al-Amriki," April 2013; Abu Bakr al-Zayla'i (Ibrahim al-Afghani), "Open Letter to Our Shaykh and Our Amir, Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri, may God protect him," April 2013.

41 Al-Shabab, now firmly under Godane's control, claimed through its official military spokesman, Abd al-Aziz Abu Mus'ab, that the two had died during a gun battle after resisting arrest by the Amniyat. Al-Afghani's and Burhan's families, however, along with an al-Shabab defector alleged that they were tried by a kangaroo al-Shabab court and then summarily executed on Godane's orders. See "Al Shabaab Extremists Kill Two of Their Chiefs," France 24, June 30, 2013; "Godane Loyalists Reportedly Execute al-Shabaab Leader Ibrahim al-Afghani," Sabahi Online, June 28, 2013.

42 Christopher Anzalone, "The Nairobi Attack and Al-Shabab's Media Strategy," *CTC Sentinel* 6:10 (2013).

43 Ken Menkhaus, "Al-Shabab's Capabilities Post-Westgate," *CTC Sentinel* 7:2 (2014); Stig Jarle Hansen, "An In-Depth Look at Al-Shabab's Internal Divisions," *CTC Sentinel* 7:2 (2014); Nelly Lahoud et al., *Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Ladin Sidelined?* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2012), pp. 38-42; Christopher Anzalone, "The Formalizing of an Affiliation: Somalia's Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahideen & Al-Qa`ida Central," al-Wasat blog, February 10, 2012.

44 In a May 2014 message, Godane opted for a non-committal "middle path." Deploying Qur'anic verses, traditions of the Prophet Muhammad's reported sayings and actions (*hadith*), citations from the writings of respected historical Sunni jurists and religious scholars, and Usama bin Ladin, he urged all the mujahidin in Syria to avoid discord, referring both to intra-jihadist fighting as well as the careless passing around of idle gossip about those "striving in the path of God." He also urged all of them to respect the leaders and religious scholars of the jihad. Although he did not mention them by name, Godane was presumably referring primarily to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Jabhat al-Nusra, the official al-Qa`ida affiliate in Syria. See Ahmed Godane, *Muslims of Bangui and Mombasa: A Tale of Tragedy*, May 14, 2014. Godane spent most of his time discussing sectarian violence in the Central African Republic and the plight of Muslims in Kenya, not on Syria, suggesting his discomfort with addressing the increasingly bitter feud between ISIL and al-Qa`ida's central leadership and its supporters in any specificity.

al-Muhajir, and Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, past leaders of ISIL's predecessor organizations, have long been popular with al-Shabab members, and each has appeared in the group's media releases. Godane, however, was ultimately unwilling to abandon al-Zawahiri, with whom he had reached an agreement to formally affiliate al-Shabab with al-Qa`ida, something the Somali insurgent leader had long wanted.[45]

Godane's death has led to predictions of al-Shabab's imminent collapse into competing factions vying for control of the group's remaining military and economic resources. The future of al-Shabab as a cohesive organization depends on a number of internal and external factors. Internally, a great deal rests on whether or not Godane, in the process of consolidating his control of the group, put in place a process, agreed upon by al-Shabab's senior leadership and military commanders, to choose a successor in case of his death or capture. The level of support from these same segments of al-Shabab for Godane's successor, Ahmad Umar, also remains an open question. The support of the group's regional governors, senior administrators, and top military commanders, as well as influential local notables and clan leaders, will be key to his longevity and success as *amir*.[46] If there are dissidents within al-Shabab that oppose Umar, their access to military and economic resources, and the extent of their support base, will have an impact on their ability to challenge him. The Kenyan foreign fighter contingent within the group, which has been steadily growing during the past few years, will also play an influential role in the trajectory of al-Shabab and its new *amir*.[47]

External factors will also play a major role in deciding the ultimate fate of al-Shabab. The strategies, decision-making, and implementation of reforms by the Somali federal government, AMISOM forces, local strongmen like Ahmad Madobe and Barre Hirale, and international actors including the United States and European Union will be key in determining whether the insurgents continue to have a pool of support to draw upon by tapping into local grievances.[48] The strengthening of governing structures, significant reduction of blatant corruption at high levels of government, allure of the federal government's "amnesty" offer to al-Shabab fighters, and reining in independent militias will significantly damage al-Shabab's narrative as well as bolster the confidence of local communities.

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support the group and assured Kenyan Muslims that the insurgents have not "forgotten" them and will come to their aid. See "What a Profitable Gain, O' Abu al-Zubayr! A Statement from the General Leadership: Congratulations and Condolences to the Islamic Nation for the Martyrdom of the Amir of Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahideen, the Shaykh Mukhtar Abu al-Zubayr, may God have mercy on him," al-Shabab, September 6, 2014.

48 Hirale recently said he would lay down his arms and enter into political negotiations with Madobe, the president of the Jubaland region, and the Somali federal government in a move seen as potentially boosting peacemaking efforts. Hirale has reportedly retained a military option by withdrawing some of his militiamen to rural areas and maintaining weapons stockpiles, in case negotiations flounder. He and Madobe most recently fought a bitter battle over control of the southern port city of Kismayo in June 2013. See "Hundreds Flee Kismayo as Clashes Reignite," BBC, June 8, 2014; Abdi Sheikh, "Somali Warlord Agrees to Talks, Boosts Government Peace Efforts," Reuters, August 31, 2014.

45 *Glad Tidings from the Two Shaykhs, Abu al-Zubayr and the Amir, Ayman al-Zawahiri*, al-Qa`ida and al-Shabab, February 9, 2012.

46 Abdi Sheikh, "Somali Islamist Rebels Pledge Allegiance to New Leader," Reuters, September 8, 2014; Feisal Omar and Abdi Sheikh, "Somalia's al Shabaab Name New Leader after U.S. Strike, Warn of Revenge," Reuters, September 6, 2014.

47 Christopher Anzalone, "Kenya's Muslim Youth Center and Al-Shabab's East African Recruitment," *CTC Sentinel* 5:10 (2012); Fredrick Nzes, "Al-Hijra: Al-Shabab's Affiliate in Kenya," *CTC Sentinel* 7:5 (2014). Notably, the eulogy statement from the "general leadership" of al-Shabab announcing Godane's death, which was released on September 6, specifically called upon Somali clans to

Recent Highlights in Political Violence

August 5, 2014 (AFGHANISTAN): An Afghan soldier opened fire on senior U.S. officers at a military training facility on the outskirts of Kabul, killing a U.S. Army general. – *New York Times, August 5*

August 6, 2014 (UNITED STATES): The FBI arrested a 62-year-old man from northeast Philadelphia, Hayatullah Dawari, and accused him of having ties to Hizb-i-Islami Gulbuddin, an al-Qa`ida-linked militant group. – *WPVI-TV Philadelphia, August 6*

August 6, 2014 (PHILIPPINES): The Philippine military said that Zulkifli bin Abdul Hir (also known as Marwan), a top Malaysian jihadist bombmaker, is still alive and in the southern Philippines. The government originally said that Marwan was killed in a U.S.-backed airstrike in February 2012. – *AFP, August 6*

August 7, 2014 (UNITED STATES): President Barack Obama said that he has approved limited airstrikes in Iraq to prevent the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) from committing an "act of genocide" against some 40,000 religious minorities trapped on a remote mountaintop in northern Iraq. – *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, August 7*

August 10, 2014 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle attacked a NATO convoy in Kabul, killing four civilians. – *Voice of America, August 10*

August 10, 2014 (NIGERIA): Suspected Boko Haram fighters kidnapped dozens of boys and men during a raid on a remote town in northeastern Nigeria. The fighters were wearing police and military uniforms. – *Reuters, August 15*

August 13, 2014 (FRANCE): The French government announced that it will send weapons to Kurdish forces in Iraq to help fight the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. – *Los Angeles Times, August 13*

August 14, 2014 (GLOBAL): A leader in al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) praised the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) for its "victories

in Iraq," but did not pledge allegiance to ISIL's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The AQAP figure, Ibrahim al-Rubaysh, also urged an end to infighting between the Sunni mujahidin. – *AFP, August 14*

August 14, 2014 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani Taliban militants attacked two airbases in Quetta, Baluchistan Province. Security forces repelled both attacks. – *The News International, August 15*

August 16, 2014 (YEMEN): A drone killed three suspected al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula militants in Hadramawt Province. – *Reuters, August 16*

August 16, 2014 (MALI): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle attacked a patrol base in Ber, 40 miles east of Timbuktu. The attack killed two UN peacekeepers. – *Reuters, August 16*

August 17, 2014 (UNITED KINGDOM): British Prime Minister David Cameron warned that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is a direct threat to the United Kingdom. According to Cameron, "If we do not act to stem the onslaught of this exceptionally dangerous terrorist movement, it will only grow stronger until it can target us on the streets of Britain." – *France 24, August 18*

August 19, 2014 (SYRIA/IRAQ): The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant released a video showing the beheading of American journalist David Foley. – *Reuters, August 20*

August 19, 2014 (SAUDI ARABIA): Saudi Arabia's top cleric, Grand Mufti Shaykh Abdul Aziz al-Shaykh, called the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and al-Qa`ida Islam's "enemy number one." He also said that "Muslims are the main victims of this extremism." – *AFP, August 18*

August 22, 2014 (IRAQ): Shi`a militiamen reportedly opened fire on a Sunni mosque in Diyala Province, killing at least 68 people. – *NBC News, August 23*

August 23, 2014 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle rammed into Baghdad's intelligence headquarters, killing at least eight people. – *NBC News, August 23*

August 23, 2014 (YEMEN): A car bomb exploded under the vehicle of a Yemeni army general in Aden, killing the man. – *AFP, August 23*

August 24, 2014 (SYRIA): Jabhat al-Nusra, al-Qa`ida's affiliate in Syria, released hostage Peter Theo Curtis, an American freelance writer who was kidnapped nearly two years ago. Curtis' freedom came after extensive mediation by Qatar. – *New York Times, August 24*

August 24, 2014 (NIGERIA): Boko Haram claimed to have established a caliphate in northeastern Nigeria. – *al-Jazira, August 25*

August 25, 2014 (PHILIPPINES): The Philippine military said that it was examining reports that about 100 Filipinos were training to be jihadists in Syria. – *Bangkok Post, August 25*

August 26, 2014 (UNITED STATES): U.S. officials said that American jihadist Douglas McCain died in the past few days while fighting for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). McCain, a one-time aspiring rapper from California, converted from Christianity to Islam about a decade ago. He died while fighting against ISIL's rival group, Jabhat al-Nusra. – *AFP, August 26*

August 30, 2014 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle attacked the Afghan intelligence agency in Jalalabad. After the explosion, armed militants stormed the building. The dead included at least three militants, two security guards, and three civilians. – *NBC News, August 30*

August 31, 2014 (SOMALIA): Al-Shabab launched a coordinated attack against the Somali intelligence headquarters in Mogadishu, killing at least five people. Seven militants were also killed. – *AFP, September 1*